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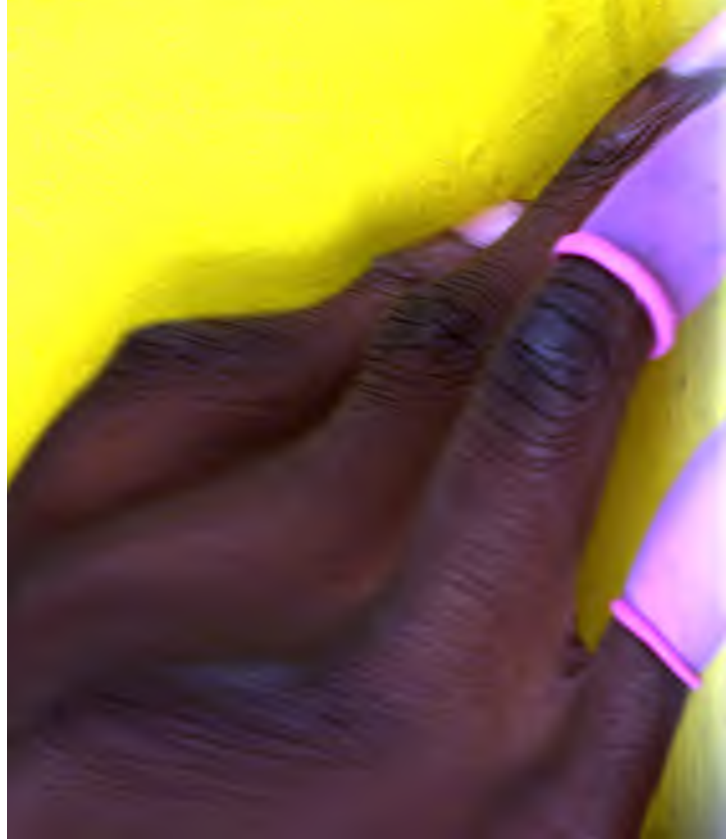
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THE
INTELLECTUAL SEVERANCE
OF
MEN AND WOMEN



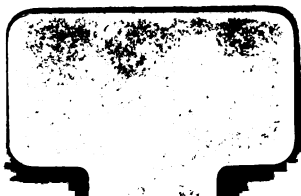
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THE
INTELLECTUAL SEVERANCE
OF
MEN AND WOMEN.

BY
JAMES McGRIGOR ALLAN,

AUTHOR OF
"GRINS AND WRINKLES," "YOUNG LADYISM," &c.

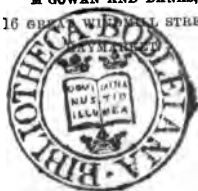
"Give me the Woman who can echo all thoughts that are noblest in Men."—BULWER LYTTON.

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SQUARE.
1860.

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M'GOWAN AND DANKS,
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THE INTELLECTUAL SEVERANCE OF MEN AND WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

RESPECTIVE FAILINGS OF MEN AND WOMEN NOT
OWING TO DIVERSITY OF NATURAL TEMPERAMENT,
BUT EDUCATION.

THE principal bar to a more thorough intellectual intercourse between men and women, is, generally, dissipation in men—frivolity in women.

Men and women are in the habit of reproaching each other as if their respective failings were the inevitable concomitants of sex. We lay upon nature the onus of our own social institutions. Woman is no more *naturally* vain, frivolous, and capricious, than man is *naturally* addicted to vice and laxity of morals.

“Nothing,” observes Mrs Jameson, “in all my experience of life has so shocked me as the low moral standard of one sex for the other. I see among women of the higher classes—those who have lived much ‘in the world,’ as it is called—a sort of mysterious horror of the immorality of men, not as a thing to be resisted, or resented, or remedied, but to be submitted to, as a sort of fatality or necessity (for so it has been instilled into them), or guarded against by a mere inefficient barricade of conven-

tional proprieties ; while I see in men of the world a contemptuous mistrust of women, an impression of their faithlessness, heartlessness, feebleness, equally fatal and mistaken."

It is evident that the peculiar faults, vices, weaknesses, &c., which are characteristic of each sex respectively, are deducible to the modification of men and women in an artificial state of society ; and consequently, if, instead of blindly abusing each other, they would honestly attempt to discover the true cause of their separate failings, each sex would find that it is in a great degree answerable for the shortcomings of the other.

If we ask the question, "Why are men dissipated, why are they inordinately addicted to club-life and bachelor pleasures which they cannot enjoy in the society of virtuous women ?" ninety-nine women out of a hundred will make some such illogical reply as this :—"Because men are naturally more vicious and sensual than women ; neither so refined in their tastes, so constant in their affections, so domestic or simple in their pleasures."

These ninety-nine women are quite satisfied that no possible blame can attach to them for the faults of their sons, brothers, or husbands. *That* is a supposition not to be entertained for an instant. The hundredth woman would reply—"It is owing to the constitution of society, as well as to natural temperament, that men can never be so pure and good as women. They mingle more with the world ; their temptations are much greater ; public opinion is more lax respecting their conduct ; they take advantage of the impunity granted them ; their sense of virtue becomes blunted."

This woman is worth arguing with. She has told us some truth, but not all. It is true that the causes of dissipation are generally the impetuosity and thoughtlessness of youth, joined to the love of

enterprise and action, the surplus energy and impatience of control characteristic of early manhood especially ; the encouragement, rather than hindrance, given by public opinion to male wickedness ; the indescribable temptations to which young men are exposed : but the greatest and principal causes of laxity in morals to youths of generous minds I believe to be, the miserably artificial state of society, inducing to an open violation of its hollow precepts and hypocritical cant, and—though last, not least—the want of sympathy and comprehension, not only from the world at large, but more particularly from that portion whence they expect most, and are consequently most disappointed—*women* !

I willingly pass over, as out of the question, a certain proportion of men whose tastes have become so thoroughly vitiated that they prefer vice to virtue ; who appear to have said, “ Evil, be thou my good.” Let us also assume another large portion of fools who become dissipated just as they adopt all-round collars and peg-tops, because it is the fashion ; who sin merely from the force of imitation, as they smoke and drink, not because they like it, but because it is too great an effort to reflect.

There still remains a vast number of men for whose errors it will be difficult to account on the ordinary pleas of youthful indiscretion, and other vague general excuses ; men of delicate sensibilities and superior abilities, carefully cultivated and refined by education. We must go deeper into the question if we would discover why men like these are too often found the most frantic votaries and most signal victims of dissipation.

What should we think of the proprietor who not only affixed no warning against trespassers, but left the gates wide open, in addition to gaps in the hedge and holes in the wall, thus inviting the wayfarer to enter his tempting pleasure-grounds ? Would

such a man be justified in making use of traps and spring-guns? Yet this is the conduct of society with respect to young men. We thrust them forth to encounter all the contaminations and temptations of the world. Prudery winks and shuts her eyes to the dangers that surround them; Religion and Virtue turn away from the bare mention of certain things. But all at once, when the poor sinner has overstepped certain conventional limits, Respectability and Decorum demand a scapegoat; that is to say, some one who has been "*found out*" must be disgraced, while hundreds go on sowing their wild oats with impunity.

As society at present exists, the young man who dares to remain *pure* must either cut himself off entirely from intercourse with others of his own age, or must possess a moral courage which not one in a thousand, I venture to think, does possess, to render him proof against that most irresistible of all weapons, ridicule—that most terrible of all punishments, so powerfully typified by Sir Bulwer Lytton, by ' "the Dweller on the Threshold" in Zanon—*fear of the world*; for every man's world is made up of the circle of his companions and associates.

The modern Joseph would be assailed by continued insults, innuendoes, jeers, and taunts, levelled against him, as "a spoon," "a muff," "a slow coach;" a whole host of terms of reproach expressive of a deficiency in manly sentiments: and this, not merely from foolish young men, but from many who are old enough to know better, and especially from a quarter whence every shaft rankles in the heart of a sensitive man—from women.

I would not be mistaken here. I do not for a moment imagine that respectable women like a man better on account of laxity of morals; but, unfortunately, women, in their ignorance of the world,

are not able to discriminate sufficiently between vice and folly. There is nothing a woman can less tolerate in a man than slowness. Now, it is impossible to be *fast* and *good* ! Ah ! if the big whiskers, and the all-rounders, and the peg-tops, and the shiny boots, and the empty pate, and the foolish talk, were all ! But it is not all. I want you, interesting, beautiful, romantic young ladies, to reflect at what a price this swashing outside, these manly virtues, comprised in that significant phrase ‘knowledge of the world,’ are bought ; at what a cost of valuable time, of health, and the engrafting of habits and tastes which may never be eradicated, all those amusing slang words, which even you are not ashamed to use at second-hand, after brother Tom and cousin Edward, were picked up.

A young lady, in her own unsophisticated innocence, before she has been out too many seasons, paints a model husband, and endows him with the most incongruous and antagonistic qualities. He is to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. The small talk which he lavishes on her is the intuition of his genius, under the inspiration of her beauty. He never talks like this to other women. He is to be brave as a lion, “sudden and quick in quarrel ;” but he was never in any midnight rows—he never “flooded” a policeman, nor slept in the station-house ! In short, to all the knowledge of “a man about town” he is to unite the ideal purity, the correct principles and guileless nature of a well-trained maiden. Truly a delightful monster ! And what a splendid husband he will make ! He will come home from his office or his counting-house, after a hard day’s work, never tired or in bad humour ; he will never wish to put on his slippers or stay at home unless his wife is that way inclined. On the contrary, he will be eager to take her in search of excitement to the ball or opera,

or some pleasant tea-party, where two-thirds of the company are unmarried ladies who have passed their "first youth."

Many good people will be shocked at the statement, but it is no less a fact, that vast numbers of young men periodically embrace dissipation as a matter of course, and so become habituated to, and hardened in vice, before they are old enough to conceive its moral enormity.

Why should this be so? Allowing for all the ebullition of youthful energy—allowing for all the prejudices of the world respecting the sowing of wild oats—allowing for all the temptations to which youth is subjected, I still think that much of this great evil might be prevented if more pains were taken to make home happier, and the domestic circle more cheerful. Especially ought women to try and remove that gulf which appears to open between the male and female mind; which intellectual disunion I am now about to examine more in detail.

CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION OF MEN FAR SUPERIOR TO THAT OF
WOMEN.

IN ascribing the errors of men in a certain degree to the want of sympathy from their female relatives, I do not in reality reproach women : I simply reflect upon and call the attention of my readers to a faulty system of education which appears to aim at rendering the mental capacity and intellectual pursuits of men and women as diverse and incompatible as possible, instead of seconding nature. We constantly repeat that women were intended to be companions for men, capable of sharing their best and most elevated thoughts ; yet we educate as if they were merely to be playthings in moments of leisure. If it is true, as many people suppose, that the mental capacities of women are inferior to those of men, that would be no authority for the remarkable diversity of training.

"That there is a difference," says Sydney Smith, "in the understanding of men and women we every day meet with, everybody we suppose must perceive ; but there is none which may not be accounted for by the difference of circumstances in which they have been placed, without referring to any conjectural differences of original conformation of mind. As long as boys and girls run about in the dirt and trundle hoops together, they are both precisely alike. If you catch up one half of these creatures and train them to a particular set of actions, and the other half to a perfectly opposite set, of course their understand-

ings will differ as one or other sort of occupations has called this or that talent into action. There is surely no occasion to go into deeper or more abstract reasoning in order to explain so very simple a phenomenon."

The truth of these remarks may be proved by observing brothers and sisters while still within the precincts of the nursery. If there is any intellectual difference discernible at that tender age, it is in the superior quickness of the girl compared with the boy. The superiority of the female intellect in youth has been asserted by some to be incontestable evidence of the inferior mental capacity of women, since the mind comes to maturity so much earlier, in the same manner as the sapling grows quicker than the oak. It may, however, be partly ascribed to the effect of education; as girls are kept more at home, and associate more with their elders, there is a tendency to an earlier elaboration of thought than in boys.

On the commencement of school-days, a great and decisive change begins. The superiority of the instruction allotted to the boy is soon apparent; and as year after year adds to his judgment, and his power of acquiring and appreciating the classics and the various branches of natural philosophy—as his ambition awakens and whispers to him what great things genius and perseverance may accomplish—the grand privilege of being born a man-child becomes apparent. The birthright of sex opens to him a thousand avenues to the true enjoyment of life and fulfilment of duties. He may leap over the barriers of prejudice, soar above the social distinctions of caste and rank; while to woman is only granted a comparative sufferance of the position in which she finds herself—a lot broadly divisible into splendid and mischievous idleness, cruel and debasing toil.

The boy leaves home. What words can adequately picture the blessed influence exerted over the young spirit by the fireside circle—that little domestic community over which presides gentle, benign woman—where female society has its purest and most profound effect, making the words *mother*, *sister*, beloved names for ever? What man has not oft wandered back in memory from the busy occupations of active life, to that diminutive paradise—that bright oasis in the desert, with all its sweet associations—where were born those principles of humanity, love, beauty, religion, which enable the heart to defy all the rude and defiling contact of the world?

That calm, family life, with all its gorgeous poetic colourings, its heavenward aspirations, its spiritual pinings—its enrapturing visions, entrancing hopes—its beautiful illusions, its serene joys, its disinterested affection, its affecting faith in the world and virtue, its ignorance of evil—finds no rival experience upon earth, with one only exception—the dream of first love. These two are shadowy types of Heaven.

Well did Wordsworth write—

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy;
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy.”

How often does the youth of intelligence return home to meet a barrier placed between him and the sympathy he craves; the joyful anticipations of finding in his mother and sisters, still the guides, associates, intellectual companions, and partakers of his best and most earnest thoughts, subject to bitter disappointment! Can he talk to them of his studies, tell them of his original ideas, speak from the fulness of his heart, pour out the treasures with

which his mind is stored? He has entered, by virtue of his manly education, into a world of thought which has already begun to sunder him intellectually from women, and will sunder him still further.

He has been enjoying the companionship of the sages, warriors, poets, scholars of antiquity; holding high converse with the mighty dead; walking in the academic groves with Plato and his disciples. He has wept over the fate of Socrates. He has listened, in company with thirty thousand Athenian citizens, to the sonorous verses of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides. Nothing that is great, glorious, and sublime in the rich field of classic literature has escaped the ardent student who has thus hived up a cornucopia of knowledge which will enlarge his sympathies with humanity, extend the scope of his intelligent and reflective powers, and beautify his soul for ever. His brain is a palimpsest on which is inscribed the grand panorama of History from the poem of Genesis down to the last revolution in France.

Let us add to the lore of antiquity, the modern standard authors in every department of thought—religion, politics, natural history, the exact sciences—and we need not wonder at the want of sympathy which begins at this period between a well-educated man and his female relatives. The fiat of society has gone forth, that the education of woman should end precisely at the age when that of man may properly be said to commence. While the brothers are sent to college, the girls are withdrawn from a fashionable boarding-school, to do *crochet* and English embroidery, attend picnics and practise the piano, and begin that delightful career of dressing, dancing, novel-reading, and flirtation—in short, that species of *dissipation* which is lawful for young women after they have “*come out*.”

A few efforts to discuss, and not to skim over the

surface of any interesting and abstract question, political, social, or literary, will soon make manifest the change which has taken place in their respective mental relations. He will discover that his mother and sisters, and the ladies whom he numbers among his acquaintance, do not understand him, and cannot converse with him. But he will also discover, what will at first surprise him not a little, that women are by no means disposed to acquiesce in the effects of the superiority of masculine education. They pay respect, not to what is said, but to the person saying it. They will listen to the parson, or the doctor, or anybody possessing a social status, an imposing manner; nay, a little curate, on account of his white neckcloth, will be preferred before our young "un-accredited hero," even when he speaks on subjects which he has meditated and studied.

A young man of enthusiastic temperament who thinks for himself, is naturally fond of making his sentiments known to those whom he loves and respects. But he will find it difficult to persevere in his attempt to raise the "bald disjointed chat"—the vapid, aimless common-place around him—into something deserving the name of *conversation*, that thing so rarely met with in mixed society, when his observations are met with a blank stare of astonishment, or with a titter of affected contempt, or some such encouraging remarks as, "Dear me! how very absurd!" or, "Well, to be sure, what an odd idea!" or, "Gracious! Edward, how can you talk such nonsense?"

Yet I have frequently witnessed an original and thoughtful sentiment received in this manner, especially in *provincial society*, where, as the French wit observed, "*un original passe pour un fou*"—"an original passes for a madman"—and where, as Balzac truly and humorously says, "it is not permitted to be original. That would be to have ideas uncompre-

hended by others ; and they desire, there, equality of mind as well as equality in manners." Nay, I have seen people who had been talking puerilities for hours, combine indignantly to silence an adventurous speaker who was guilty of the crime of trying to introduce the element of *thought*.*

Yet, society professes to wonder that young men turn away disgusted from the drawing-room and the tea-party for the club-room and the discussion-forum. I reply, let society reform itself ; let there be less cant, less dulness. Let women really attempt to understand their husbands, and brothers, and sons—which they do not ; let a beautiful woman try and make herself also an intellectual companion for a man of intelligence ; and you will see whether men will not reform themselves—whether dissipation will not diminish, whether a more intimate mental communion between the sexes will not be established.

Perhaps no more bitter disappointment awaits the young man of education and refinement at his entrance into life, than the discovery that the elevated pursuits of scholarship will avail him so little in the society of women. He nurses dreams, that the peculiar delicacy and keen perceptions of the female nature will make women delightful intellectual companions. To be appreciated, to be understood, to be valued, to be loved, for no perishable mundane qualities, but for the culture of the immortal mind, by one of these beautiful creatures, would be the realisation of the exquisite fiction of Cupid and Psyche.

I remember an instance of this which may be interesting to the reader. A young man, fresh from the University, thought he had discovered in a cer-

* See Mr. Mill's Essay on Liberty, for some valuable remarks on the tendency of the age to repress all individual originality.

tain young lady a congenial soul who entirely reciprocated his love for books. The young lady belonged to an old and highly-respectable county family, collateral branches of which are extensively found not merely in England, but throughout the civilised world. We will call her name *Nimrod*! She was one of those young ladies who attain the art of appearing extremely interested in topics to which they are totally indifferent—who listen patiently with a gravity which thoroughly imposes on the speaker, while their only thought is, “He is falling in love with me for my comprehensive understanding as well as my beauty”—one of those ladies who can vary their manner to suit the taste of their suitors, and can, in short, be “all things to all men.” The young gentleman had begun to feel tender sentiments for her, under the impression that she understood him, had digested every word he had ever spoken to her, and perfectly sympathised with him. Miss Nimrod, however, having succeeded in securing her prey, as she thought, beyond the possibility of escape, had tired of her conquest, and was now determined to have a little sport with him, on the same principle that a cat plays with a mouse which she has rendered unable to escape.

One evening, he found Miss Nimrod surrounded by a phalanx of tittering beaux, men in every respect opposite to himself, who all looked as if they had come out of bandboxes, with whiskers “of the required cattish length,” whose persons were evidently more adorned than their minds, and who pronounced the most vapid common-places, the most inane compliments, in loud, drawling tones, while the man of thought blushed in uttering the most original and beautiful ideas. As he approached, he overheard the young lady in whom he fondly hoped to find an intellectual companion and friend, a woman worthy to be his *wife*, say, “Oh, here comes the read-

ing-man!" Immediately the facial muscles of the beings who wore coats and moustaches were agitated in anticipation of the laugh which they expected at the expense of "*the muff*." "Well, Mr ———," continued the young lady, in a voice which did not conceal the latent sneer, "pray what new book have you to recommend this evening?" The scholar bowed, and ere he turned on his heel, replied, in a voice which expressed all the scorn he felt, "The last new handbook of etiquette."

CHAPTER III.

CONSEQUENCES IN THE WANT OF INTELLECTUAL
SYMPATHY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.

WOMEN rarely interest themselves in those topics of conversation which employ the energies of thinking men. When such are mooted in their presence, they either sit silent, or endeavour to change the subject. If they do talk, they display ignorance, and repeat the ideas of others. Married women reproduce the ideas of their husbands. Women, in general, are echoes of the last speaker. They have not a quick perception of humour, and originality frightens them.

The impossibility of arguing with a woman has become proverbial. If you attempt to argue with a man who has any pretensions to education, there is a possibility of convincing or being convinced, and of arriving at some logical termination. But a woman, aware of her own deficiency in mental training, will stick to any absurdity she has uttered, lest by admitting she is in the wrong on any point, she may give her adversary the slightest advantage over her. I have noted this peculiarity in conversing with women of more than average ability.

We went on very well up to a certain point; but when I attempted to lead them yet another step in logical sequence, into a more advanced position, they demurred, even though the proposition was one not more difficult than those to which they had already assented; as if the capability of discerning truth had all at once deserted them. The whole

previous structure which we had so patiently raised, disappeared like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaving not a wreck behind. It was necessary to begin all over again; and if I advanced any statement which they did not like, which disturbed existing prejudices, it was curious and amusing to see how the manly armour of philosophy was discarded at once, and they took refuge in the little arts of their sex. They either turned off the question with a joke quite irrelevant to the subject, or else *pouted!* I will, however, do them the justice to say that in all cases they had the last word.

I do not remember the name of the author who defines woman as a creature who cannot reason, and pokes the fire from the top.

Daily, with bitter sighs of disappointment, are young men discovering that the tie of sympathy and intellectual equality which once made home so pleasant, and female society so agreeable, is weakened; daily some ardent spirit is pained and puzzled in reflecting on the intellectual gulf which separates man from woman, when he finds that the mother whose tender solicitude and affection he still reciprocates with his whole heart is but a child to him in thought and knowledge—that the loved and loving sister who *was* so much cleverer than himself has contracted erroneous ideas, and fixed prejudices which she will never overcome. On the contrary, time will widen the breach; for, with women, progress in life tends to confirm rather than to eradicate prejudice. The mind, like the waist, becomes more contracted by habit.

Shall we pity men alone for this fatal estrangement at an age when intellectual sympathy is most important to both sexes? Men lose much by it, but women *more!* How desirable for every young lady at this most critical period, when the current of her life begins to set towards happiness or the reverse—

when, with much idle time on her hands, and the imagination unduly excited, without a corresponding balance in the cultivation of the judgment, she is exposed to all the flattery of men, totally ignorant of the world and human nature, condemned to guess at the characters and qualities of the men whom she meets in society;—how desirable, under such circumstances, would be the closest sympathy, the most unreserved communion with a brother!

And to a mother also, at a time when the life of vanity must, or ought to be, at an end—when personal charms are gone—instead of sinking into the insignificance which so many dowagers do, in their declining years—instead of the dreary dressings for parties, the age of cards after the youth of folly, and all the miserable methods of killing time to which unemployed women in maturity resort,—might she not arouse once more within her mind the embers of thought, by conversing with her son, and, by a partial participation in his studies, endeavour to enter in some degree into his intellectual life, and by this resumption of her education begin a new lease of existence?

How extremely painful to find education founded on the prejudices of society erecting a barrier against the intellectual sympathy between the sexes, at the very time when Nature has developed to the utmost the reciprocal influences of men and women! Every well-educated man at this period of life, before the refinement produced by teaching has been sullied by contact with the world, regards a young woman in his own station as something infinitely better and purer than himself. Not merely in schoolboy days, but in the commencement of manhood, that delicious tinge of sentiment produced by the study of the classics; that association of the highest ideal intellect with all the perfections of female beauty, illustrated by the sculptors of

ancient Greece ; the exemplification of women as the type of a religion which worshipped female deities, and established the vestal virgins of ancient Rome ; all the sublime traits of woman's devotion, heroism, courage, magnanimity, with which the page of History is so thickly studded ; lastly, and crowning the whole, the examples of female worth and purity placed daily before his eyes in his mother and sisters—the charms and accomplishments of young and fair women, seen through the magnifying media of the poetry and enthusiasm of his own heart—the emotions which tell him that with woman the brightest, happiest page of man's destiny must be related ;—all these reflections conspire to cause a devotion and reverence for the sex akin to idolatry.

Whence, then, comes that taint of mysogony which has characterised some of the greatest minds in all ages, from the sacred writers of the Jews down to the present day ? In some sense, the satirists of women may be said to have complimented the sex by comparing them with an ideal moral standard, and expecting from them a higher degree of purity than from men. I will confine myself to one celebrated singular example. The tragic writer Euripides, whose hatred and contempt of the sex is continually breaking out in the most impertinent manner in his dramas—who was always thrusting on his audience his own ungallant and disagreeable opinions respecting them—at the same time so fully comprehended the true worth and beauty of the female character, as to create such immortal conceptions as *Alcestis*, *Iphigeneia*, *Macaria*, &c.

I introduce for the amusement of my lady-readers some detached passages in which Euripides displayed this unfavourable feature of his character, merely premising that we cannot expect from the laws and

institutions of ancient Greece that exhibition of female excellence so common in modern Europe, and of course in our own country especially. He thus announces the approach of a troop of virgins :

“ A troop of virgins to the royal house
Advances ; and that sex hath Nature formed
Prone to complain : if once they take the occasion,
Small though it be, to give their words a vent,
Another, and another, still is added ;
And 'tis their pleasure 'mongst themselves to speak
Nothing that owns the power of moderation.”

He puts into the mouth of Medea the following :

“ Thou hast skill, and art
A woman ; Nature formed our sex to good
Of slight capacity, but to revenge
Of ready and inventive subtlety.”

Again he makes her say :

“ But we women
Are——what we are.”

A passage which suggests one very similar in Shakspeare's ‘Timon of Athens :’

“ If there be twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be——as they are.”

On another occasion, Euripides makes the Chorus, consisting of Corinthian dames, solemnly chant the following lines :

“ Through many an argument profound,
With studious care and thought refined,
Oft have I pondered in my mind
If female minds may be allowed
The depths of truth to sound.”

They go on to say that a favoured few may be so gifted, and then praise the life of single-blessedness

as being more free from care than that of matrimony, in strains which display, at least, great worldly wisdom :

“ This truth to all will I declare,
The free, the unwedded, those that claim
No title to a father's name,
Uncumbered with that care,
The paths of life with purer pleasure trace
Than those that own a numerous race,” &c.

Returning from this little digression by which I have sought to enliven my page, let me hope that my lady-readers will see in those observations no spirit of reproach, but rather friendly admonition. If I can lead one woman to reflect that the dissipation of which she complains so bitterly may be the *fruit* of this want of sympathy, not the *cause*, and seriously to take counsel with herself as to whether a change of conduct on her part may not help to diminish it, by endeavouring to share, as far as she is capable, in the intellectual tastes of her son, brother or husband, I shall not have written in vain.

All I demand is justice for young men. When a gentleman happens to be jilted—an ugly word—well, let me use the milder term “ disappointed ” by a young lady,—women are unanimous in cautioning us not to judge of their sex by this sample, and they assure us that they are not all alike. Let us also assure them that men are not all alike, and that the generous and the good are often led astray, and found side by side with the sensualist and the hypocrite, under that specious pretence of “ seeing life.” We see only the fault, and steadily close our eyes to its extenuations. Because young men whose heads are full of classic lore, with teeming imaginations and generous impulses, but ignorant of the world, find vent for surplus energies in some acts of

folly, it is as wrong as it is absurd to class them with the sons of perdition.* We should rather

* An eloquent writer in the 'Westminster' has well traced the dissipation of men to its principal cause, the hollowness and insipidity of society, as follows :—"Let it be observed that the existing formalities of social intercourse drive away many who most need its refining influence, and drive them into injurious habits and associations. Not a few men, and not the least sensible men either, give up in disgust this going out to stately dinners and stiff evening parties, and, instead, seek society in clubs, and cigar-divans, and taverns. 'I'm sick of this standing about in drawing-rooms, talking nonsense and trying to look happy,' will answer one of them, when taxed with his desertion. 'Why should I any longer waste time, and money, and temper? Once I was ready enough to rush home from the office to dress; I sported embroidered shirts, submitted to tight boots, and cared nothing for tailors' and haberdashers' bills. I know better now. My patience lasted a good while; for though I found each night pass stupidly, I always hoped the next would make amends. But I'm undeceived. Cab-hire and kid-gloves cost more than any evening party pays for—or, rather, it is worth the cost of them to avoid the party. No, no; I'll no more of it. Why should I pay five shillings a time for the privilege of being bored?' If now we consider that this very common mood tends towards billiard-rooms, towards long sittings over cigars and brandy-and-water, towards Evans's and the Coal-hole, towards every place where amusement may be had, it becomes a question whether those precise observances which hamper our set meetings have not to answer for much of the prevalent dissoluteness. Men must have excitements of some kind or other, and if debarred from the higher ones will fall back upon the lower. It is not that those who thus take to irregular habits are essentially those of low tastes. Often it is quite the reverse. Amongst half-a-dozen intimate friends abandoning formalities and sitting at ease round the fire, none will enter with greater enjoyment into the highest kinds of social intercourse, the

endeavour to reclaim them. While we hate the crime, we should pardon the offender.

genuine communion of thought and feeling; and if the circle includes women of intelligence and refinement, so much the greater is their pleasure. It is because they will no longer be choked with the mere dry husks of conversation which society offers them, that they fly its assemblies, and seek those with whom they may have discourse that is at least real, though of inferior quality. The men who thus long for substantial mental sympathy, and will go where they can get it, are often indeed much better at the core than the men who are content with the inanities of gloved and scented party-goers—men who feel no need to come morally nearer to their fellow-creatures than they can come whilst standing, tea-cup in hand, answering trifles with trifles, and who, by feeling no such need, prove themselves shallow-thoughted and cold-hearted," &c.—See 'Westminster Review,' April, 1854.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE MORAL PURITY OF MEN AND
WOMEN.

THE superiority of women to men in moral *conduct*, is a faith which every good man desires to believe. But when we consider the subordinate position prescribed to women by law and custom—the indifferent education they receive, which unfits them to grapple with abstract ideas of truth and virtue, and the actual life of frivolity and idleness which such numbers of women in the upper and middle classes lead—the total shirking of disagreeable duties during the week, and the hypocritical observance of religion on the seventh day,—I am inclined to think that this admission of moral superiority which ordinary men are so ready to yield, is a bribe of compliment and gallantry to quiet the sex under the deprivation of substantial privileges which would really place them on an equality with men: especially as I find that those men who are personally most polite to women, who call them angels and “all that,” cherish in secret the greatest contempt for them.

If women generally could know, what but a few reflecting women do, that these are the best men, and truest admirers of their sex, who cherish so high an ideal of Woman as to be made uncomfortable by her faults and failings, they would rather be blamed by men of this stamp than praised by others who, after plastering them with compliments and fulsome flattery at a dinner-table, will,

when the ladies have left the room, speak of their sex in a way which would make their cheeks burn with indignation if they heard it. But they never do know it until it is too late. They turn away from the men too sincere to flatter them, and give themselves in marriage to men who secretly despise and ridicule them. Then they complain that they are deceived. It is always their own fault. Too many women have been accustomed to be fed on sugar-plums in the shape of falsehood and flattery, so that they resent the wholesome diet of truth. They cannot bear to be told that they have any failings.

I may be wrong, but I mistrust the purity which depends on ignorance. It seems to me that the greater the intellect becomes by cultivation, the more elevated will be the moral feelings. I have always believed man to be the head of creation, nor have I found that superior women disputed it. "A truly good man," says Miss Muloch, in her 'Woman's Thoughts about Woman,' "from the larger capacities of the male nature both for virtue and vice, is in one sense more good than any good woman."

The Countess Hahn-Hahn, in her novel 'Faustina,' gives this eloquent testimony to the superiority of man :—

"Without pleasure in that which has been undertaken in good earnest—without devotion to it, satisfaction in it, triumph with it—nothing great was ever yet accomplished: what else is the pulse of their life? Inspiration is the electric shock which runs through the chain of existence; and history shows that it is only received by men.

"Only by men?" interrupted Faustina; "and the prophetesses of the Hebrews, and the Roman matrons who laughed at death, and the priestesses of the German tribes! and the heroines of Saragossa?"

"I except the mere impulse. When a woman's heart is touched, when it is moved by love—be it for an individual, for her country, or for her God—then the electric spark is communicated, and the fire of inspiration flames up. But even then, woman desires no more than to suffer and die for what she loves. No woman was ever excited to the creating, controlling, world-lifting point—no, never: that is by inspiration. By intrigue, by caprice—likely enough; she amuses herself with these occasionally. But it never yet entered the mind of a woman to make her lover immortal, like Petrarch's Laura and Dante's Beatrice. They do not even master art—much less conquer science. *That woman remains to be born, who is capable of interesting herself for an abstract idea, to the extent of enduring chains and tortures for its sake, like Galileo with his* *SI PUR SI MUOVE*. We cannot so much as form a notion of a female Socrates."

Nor, I will add, of a female Shakspeare.* Let me confess, I know nothing better, greater, and, I will add, nothing purer, in the truest sense of that word, than a good, high-souled, intellectual man; notwithstanding the invariable per-

* "In matters intellectual and moral, the long strain it is that beats them dead. Do not look for a Bacon, a Newton, a Handell, a Victoria Hugo. Some American ladies tell us education has stopped the growth of these. No! mesdames, these are not in nature.

"They can bubble letters in ten minutes, that you could no more deliver in ten days than a river can play like a fountain. They can sparkle gems of stories: they can flash little diamonds of poems. The entire sex has never produced one opera or one epic that mankind could tolerate for a minute: and why? These come by long, high-strung labour."

'White Lies,' by Charles Reade.

sistence of artists in representing angels as insipid young women, with light hair, blue eyes, and the wings of birds attached to their shoulders. A human being with wings would be as great an incongruity as a mermaid, a satyr, or a centaur.

In what do purity and virtue consist? In the successful resistance of temptation, or in being carefully screened from the slightest taint of a certain kind of error. Narrow-minded persons

“Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to.”

A woman can take no credit to herself, if her fashionable dissipation is of a less heinous kind than the dissipation which she vituperates in men. Yet many women profess to think all men who remain unmarried after a certain age, monsters of depravity, as if virtue had fled from whiskers and moustaches, combined with knowledge of the world—popularly supposed to awaken sympathy for humanity in a well-trained mind—to dwell in drawing-rooms with bare shoulders, contracted waists, frivolity, ignorance, prejudice, and flirtation.

Men too often pay a dear price for their knowledge of the world in the loss of innocence, while, on the other hand, the virtues of respectable women are too often found shadowed by uncharitable prejudices and the absence of noble sympathies. A little child is in one sense more innocent than his father, because too young to be tainted with worldly sin, but can hardly be called a better being.

Of course, even women of the world, who have no higher ideas of virtue than “to dwell in decencies for ever” and give no occasion to scandal, are more proper, more correct, more chaste in their conduct, than men. But there is a chastity, not of the body, but of the soul, in which many women of reputations scrupulously intact are utterly deficient.

VIRTUE, in the highest, truest sense of that much-abused word, can only be found existent in a mind familiar with sublime thoughts and imbued with profound principles. It is this elevation of the divine spark which the petty character of female education, and consequent insignificance of their views and opinions on all abstract questions which concern the progress and welfare of humanity—the frivolity of their lives, satisfied with making conquests while in the heyday of youth and beauty, till selfish matrimonial schemes usurp the impulse of vanity—renders so comparatively rare in women.

“Our fashion,” says a writer in the ‘Edinburgh Review,’ “may be considered the aggregate of the opinions of our women. In order to account for the tone fashion receives, we have but to inquire as to the education bestowed upon them. Have we instilled into them those public principles (as well as private accomplishments) which are calculated to ennoble opinion, and to furnish their own peculiar inducements of reward to a solid and lofty merit in the opposite sex? Our women are divided into two classes—the domestic and the dissipated. The latter employ their lives in the pettiest intrigues, or, at best, in a round of vanities that usurp the name of amusements. Women of the highest rank alone take such an immediate share in politics; and that share, it must be confessed, brings anything but advantage to the State. No one will deny that they are the first to laugh at principles which, it is but just to say, the education we have given them precludes them from comprehending, and to excite the parental emotions of the husband by reminding him that the advancement of his sons requires interest with the minister. In an hour of wavering between principle and interest, on which side would their influence be? Would they inculcate the

shame of a pension, or the glory of a sacrifice to the public interest ?”

“The truth is,” says a writer in the ‘Westminster Review,’ “that many women, especially among those beyond the necessity of labour for subsistence, and some among those less fortunate, live a life most frivolous, with minds untrained to high virtue ; caring only to wear, as an armour from the world’s attack, the uniform of virtue, which passes current ; expending their thoughts on persons, and that through no sympathy, but from a morbid love of that kind of excitement ; indulging this to such excess, that social communion has become a mockery from which simple faith from each to each is gone ; for they meet but to hear and speak of some new thing, of each other—nothing that shall induce wise, kind thoughts, stimulate to more earnest work, or make them feel that society is a reality, but to satisfy the craving of an entirely selfish, morbid feeling ; that the influence is often for evil, inducing belief for a while where no belief should be ; inducing prejudice, misconception of persons and events, peculiarly in the minds of the men within the sphere of their influence ; for of necessity they influence, and often healthier hearts and sounder minds than their own.”

Many women who complacently form a low estimate of our sex by looking solely at the moral errors of men, would be highly indignant if men in return were to deduce a low estimate of their sex from fallen women. Yet, it would be quite as logical for men to judge of women in this partial manner, as it is for women to take microscopic views of male sensuality and debauchery, and shut their eyes to all noble examples of masculine honour, virtue, patriotism, industry, genius ; and to the grand and significant fact, that it is men who rule the world, and achieve all the great and wonderful

works which minister to human welfare and progress. The grand functions of woman are maternity and rearing children ; and I know she thus fulfils duties appointed by the Creator, quite as important in the scale of being as those of man. So little demand is there for woman's assistance in those departments which are the essential prerogative of man, that could the male intellect be suddenly suspended or paralysed, there is not sufficient conception of the abstract qualities of justice, morality, truth, and virtue in all the women at present existing in the world, to keep civilisation alive for one week. Take away the strong guiding intellect and the strong protecting arm of man, and woman sinks into an idiot and a slave.

While conceding the fact that narrow-minded and sensual men and women will reciprocally entertain mean opinions of each other, judging solely from their own personal experience, do not for a moment imagine that men refined by education and thought judge of women through such an imperfect medium. No, verily, it is not from the poor outcast, whose sin is the product of the social structure in which her lot is cast ; who has erred from actual want, or from a venial longing to procure those pleasures, those luxuries, those dissipations, which *ladies!* enjoy with impunity, but for which the *young person!* must pay such a dear price : it is not from these unfortunates, to whom Jesus of Nazareth was invariably kind and forgiving, but from a class of women *infinitely more degraded*, that men derive a low estimate of the sex ; a class whose type is to be found in drawing-rooms, among the wealthy, the great, and highly respectable.

This is the sort of woman from whom good, intellectual, high-souled men, who pine to believe in female worth, turn away in disgust, saddened,

shocked, and disappointed ;—the hackneyed woman of the world, the representative of dissipation in her own sex, who, without any of those temptations to which men are continually more or less exposed, takes credit to herself as the better being, and plumes herself on something she calls *virtue* ! which may be interpreted as one-third insensibility, one-third vanity, and one-third fear of the world ; who makes her superiority in this one respect an apology for failing in every other point of female duty—this self-approved pattern of purity, who, when young, lived for dressing and dancing ; who ran the gauntlet for a certain number of seasons among *roués* for a husband ; who married for an establishment ; who never felt LOVE in her life ; who leaves her children to the care of governesses and servants, while she drags her unfortunate husband to a ball or opera every evening—yet who prides herself on never outraging the proprieties ; with virtue and religion constantly on her lips, while understanding and practising neither—“content to dwell in decencies for ever ;” unmerciful to the erring of her own sex, unsympathising with humanity, or with any great and noble cause, believing only in wealth and worldly honours, and her own little caste ; whose whole life, from the cradle to the grave, is one consistent series of selfish sacrifices to her own interest, vanity, and pleasures.

It is indeed difficult to overrate the value of chastity in woman. Yet, not even should this, much less the reputation of it, be deemed a fitting compensation for all other female virtues, as it is in a class of women whom Molière has painted in these words : “ You represent one of those women who, provided they do not indulge in gallantry, think they can do everything else with impunity ; of those women who entrench themselves proudly in their prudish-

ness, and think that all the best qualities of others should go for nothing in comparison with a wretched honour about which nobody cares." *

Will any one affirm that the class which the inimitable satirist thus typifies is extinct in our day? Is it difficult to find women, and those in the higher ranks of society, who virtually trample on every quality which makes a woman amiable or respectable, and seem to think they have a prescriptive right to do so as long as they are *virtuous*? This word seems to have lost its meaning. They may be shrews, pedants, and hypocrites—cold, unfeeling, unloving, or else foolishly and selfishly fond of their husbands and families, to the exclusion of all other sympathies; they may be stupid, vain, frivolous, madly fond of dissipation, addicted to cards, gossip and scandal, intemperate in eating and drinking, slovenly in their persons, obstinate, perverse, sulky, melancholy, fanatical, superstitious, ignorant: a woman may possess all these and other faults—what then?—she is chaste. But how should she be otherwise? She has been hedged around by all the conventionalities of social life. To have betrayed her husband, or violated her matrimonial vows, would have brought disgrace and ruin to herself. Did her duty as a wife stop here—not to be guilty? Were there no positive duties, such as making her husband happy by studying his tastes, pursuits, &c. ?—there, there, you have said quite

* "Vous, vous représentez une de ces femmes qui, pourvu qu'elles ne fassent point l'amour, croient que tout le reste leur est permis: de ces femmes qui se retranchent toujours fièrement sur leur prudence, regardent un chacun de haut en bas, et veulent que toutes les plus belles qualités que possèdent les autres ne soient rien en comparaison d'un misérable honneur dont personne ne se soucie."

MOLIERE, '*L'Impromptu de Versailles*.'

enough. A shrill scream of reprobation goes up from hundreds of thousands of similarly virtuous women, who think that reputation is the one thing needful; and their miserable henpecked husbands faintly re-echo the cry that they are the paragons of virtue, and patterns to the world. Enough of

*" Ces dragons de vertu, ces honnêtes diablesses." **

I will close this chapter with the following extracts from Juvenal, leaving it to the reader to decide whether the characters he depicts were exclusive products of Roman civilisation, or have still their types in modern society. If the former supposition be correct, we will gaze upon these specimens of female foibles with the curious interest we now bestow on the restoration of fossil animals. If the latter be the true hypothesis, we may derive a valuable lesson of the uniformity of human nature when developed under such different conditions.

The Woman puffed up with Family Pride.

"Suppose her nobly born, young, rich, and fair,
And (though a coal-black swan be far more rare)
Chaste as the Sabine wives, who rushed between
The kindred hosts, and closed the unnatural scene;
Yet, who could bear to lead an humbled life,
Cursed with the veriest plague—a faultless wife?
Some simple rustic at Venusium bred
O let me rather than Cornelia wed,
If to great virtues greater pride she join,
And count her ancestors as current coin.
Take back, for mercy's sake, thy Hannibal!
Away with vanquished Syphax, camp and all!
Troop with the whole of Carthage! I'd be free
From all this pageantry of worth—and thee."

"These dragons of virtue, these honest she-devils."

A Wife too conscious of her own Virtues.

"Beauty and worth are purchased much too dear,
 If a wife force them hourly on your ear.
 For say, what pleasure can we hope to find,
 Even in this boast, this phoenix of her kind,
 If, warped with pride, on all around she lour,
 And in your cup more gall than honey pour?
 Oh! who so blindly wedded to the State,
 As not to shrink from such a perfect mate—
 Of every virtue feel the oppressive weight,
 And curse the worth he loves seven hours in eight."

A Shrew.

"Nought must be given, if she opposes; nought,
 If she opposes, must be sold or bought.
 She tells him where to love and where to hate,
 Shuts out the ancient friend whose beard his gate
 Knew from its downy to its hoary state; }
 And when pimps, parasites, of all degrees,
 Have power to will their fortunes as they please,
 She dictates his, and impudently dares
 To name his very rivals for his heirs!
 'Go, crucify that slave!' 'For what offence?
 Who the accuser? where the evidence?
 For when the life of man is in debate,
 No time can be too long, no care too great;
 Hear all, weigh all, with caution, I advise.'
 'Thou sniveller! is a slave a man?' she cries.
 'He's innocent, be't so—'tis my command,
 My will: let that, sir, for a reason stand.'"

Mothers-in-Law.

"While your wife's mother lives, expect no peace;
 She teaches her with savage joy to fleece
 A bankrupt spouse; kind creature, she befriends
 The lover's hopes, and when her daughter sends
 An answer to his prayer, the style inspects,
 Softens the cruel, and the wrong corrects."

Curtain Lectures.

"Tis night, yet hope no slumbers with your wife,
The nuptial bed is still the scene of strife ;
There lives the keen debate, the clamorous brawl,
And quiet never comes, that comes to all.
Fierce as a tigress plundered of her young,
Rage fires her breast, and loosens all her tongue.
When conscious of her guilt, she feigns to groan,
And chides your loose amours to hide her own ;
Storms at the scandal of your baser flames,
And weeps her injuries from imagined names
With tears that marshall'd at their station stand,
And flow impassioned as she gives command."

CHAPTER V.

FEMALE PRUDERY DEPRECIATES INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS, AND CONFOUNDS PURITY WITH IGNORANCE.

THERE is a prudery and hypocrisy gaining ground in society with respect to the education of women which has much to do with the intellectual severance of the sexes. Take, for instance, the prevailing prejudices with regard to the books which women ought and ought not to read. It is strangely inconsistent with the admission that women possess a mind and soul like ourselves, to taboo standard authors with which every man of average education is expected to be acquainted. And the readiness, with which women themselves yield to the popular prejudice on this point, that it is an insult to their delicacy to suppose they have read such works, is at variance with their pretensions to a mental equality with our sex ; for it implies that a properly-trained female mind, even in maturity, is incapable of deriving benefit and strength from the same regimen which improves the male intellect.

This diversity of education in the two sexes, then, is the grand proof of the moral and intellectual superiority of women compared with men. We poor men know our inferiority, and endeavour to remedy nature's deficiencies as far as possible by art. Men read everything. Man feels that his heart is naturally so much more depraved than that of woman, that it is necessary to educate it in the same proportion. His virtues, his patriotism, must be supported and increased by an intimate acquaintance.

with the profound scholars, the glorious heroes, and the great events of history. His intellect must be rendered practical, comprehensive, acute, by the study of mathematics. His sentiments must be polished by reading the great standard authors both in poetry and prose.

But to overlay the acknowledged superiority of the female mind by any such culture would be superfluous, and is scouted by our existing systems of education as absurd.

"To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume o'er the violet,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

There are would-be innovators on time-honoured custom who maintain that a woman's mind requires the same invigorating and refining process as that of a man ; who say that women should study the classics and mathematics, and should read the elder British novelists, and the great poets and authors whose works reflect nature and society in all the strong prismatic hues of truth ; that the objection of too great licence of style should be really no hindrance, for that a cultivated and well-principled mind, whether male or female, can be trusted, after a certain age, "to refuse the evil and choose the good :"; and these misguided people add, that the virtue which requires the bulwark of ignorance is a spurious virtue.

But why should we dwell longer on these absurd suggestions, which, carried into practice, would introduce the revolutionary principle into all "genteel establishments for young ladies?" Can we desire any better testimony to the soundness of the present system of female education than observation of the "*finished*" young ladies which these establishments duly send forth? They know all the *ologies*, and, six months after leaving school, they could tell you

the exact dates of a great many important events, though it is possible that they entertain rather a jumbled idea of the great phases of history—the charming creatures !

But then they are *so pure*. We certainly have attained that great desideratum with a vengeance. It is possible, indeed, that, as in the case of Toots, Miss Pimony may have overdone it. Our women are arrived at such a pleasant, agreeable, and blissful state of purity and innocence—such a morbid sensitiveness to the approach of anything in the slightest degree “*improper*,” that their feelings of delicacy are wounded at every instant. You had better be careful, in talking with a young lady, to pick and choose your words with the utmost care, or you will inadvertently cause the flush of indignant modesty to overspread her countenance. On the whole, it will be better to restrict yourself to the weather, and topics generally which are not likely to produce enthusiasm, lest you should unwittingly offend.

Would you venture to talk to her on any abstract question of philosophy, politics, or religion, as you would with one of our depraved sex ? How far will you proceed before you offend some prejudice, or get beyond that limit of thought at which she has been accustomed to stop ? and if you do go beyond that, you are a socialist, a radical, or an atheist, as a matter of course. Would you attempt to read her your favourite extracts from the best authors ? You had better try it *once* ; that would be quite sufficient. Probably, before you have read half-a-dozen lines you will come plump on some phrase or word, not calculated, we admit, when considered in reference to the text, to have any disturbing effect on our masculine minds, degraded and deadened by similar studies. To us the passage may appear full of beauty, and call up emotions of pity, tenderness, and love ; while to the mind of

the lady so much more unsophisticated, to her more acute and delicate perceptions, an improper idea is immediately suggested, and the consequence is that her feelings are shocked, hurt, disgusted, where we, hardened in our masculine comprehension, thought it impossible that offence could be taken, seeing that the author intended to create none.

Would you dare to lead her through a gallery of sculpture? Would you presume to point out to her chaste eye, the proportions of "the statue that enchants the world," or "the lord of the unerring bow?" She will either gaze on them with owl-like indifference, or hurry away shocked from such an improper exhibition. Yet artists, both male and female, will come and draw from these same statues; coarse and degraded beings, who owe to the lamentable prejudices of a professional education the impression that they are refining and elevating their minds by dwelling on shapes of beauty! What noble proofs of the excellence of Miss Pimony's system is this delightful quickness to scent out the ghost of indecorum!

It has been seriously proposed, and that from a very high clerical quarter, that there should be none but draped statues in the Crystal Palace, where the enthusiastic art-student may feast his eyes on correct reproductions of the masterpieces of sculpture collected from every gallery in Europe. The Roman Empire fell from barbarians without, but our Vandalism is within. An exceedingly narrow-minded gentleman from a provincial town once favoured me with his opinions on the statues of the Venus and Apollo in the British Museum, and also on the casts in the Crystal Palace. The Goth agreed with the clerical dignitary to whom I have referred, and thought it extremely improper that such statues should be exhibited. "Think of their effect on young men from the country." He went on to make such remarks respecting these matchless

creations,* as sufficiently proved to me that the grossness and impurity of his own ignorant and

* The greatest poetical genius of the present century wrote of the Apollo and Venus as follows :

“ Or view the Lord of the unerring bow—
The God of life, and poesy, and light—
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight ;
The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance ; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

“ But in his delicate form—a dream of Love
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above,
And madden'd in that vision—are exprest
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest—
A ray of immortality—and stood
Star-like, around, until they gathered to a god.

“ There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with beauty ; we inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
Part of its immortality ; the veil
Of heaven is half undrawn ; within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What mind can make, when Nature's self would fail ;
And to the fond idolators of old
Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould.

“ We gaze, and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
Reels with its fulness ; there—for ever there—
Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
We stand as captives, and would not depart.
Away !—there need no words, nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have eyes :
Blood—pulse—and breast, confirm the Dardan Shepherd's prize.”

BYRON'S ‘ Childe Harold.’

wanton mind formed a veil impenetrable by all ideas of beauty. "There are countenances," says John Sterling, "far more indecent than the naked form of the Medicean Venus."

If we endeavour to carry this extreme nice-mindedness into literature, we must begin by suppressing the 'Paradise Lost' of Milton; for surely the mind impure enough to be offended by the Apollo and the Venus, will be terribly shocked with the description of the matrimonial joys of our first parents. I have never heard Milton called an indecent author. Perhaps one reason of this may be, that he is so little read; numbers of highly-respectable people thinking it a point of duty to admire where they have been told to admire, to condemn where they have been told to condemn; and thus it is that we hear books praised and blamed daily by those who have never looked into a page of such books in their lives. We should also have to suppress Shakspeare, and a very large portion of the Bible.

And all this prudery, this mock-modesty too, in an age when the innocents from Belgravia, Tyburnia, and May Fair make their Sunday toilets from the same motives of vanity which lead them to dress for the opera of 'La Traviata!' Ladies must not own to having read Fielding, or Smollet, or Sterne, or Byron, in an age when long newspaper columns of police reports and divorce cases, related with all the disgusting minutiae of detail, are served up for the delight of young and old; in an age when a number of female novels, conveying all the poison of the worst French romances, without their wit or genius, and generally wrapping up a tale of seduction in the most unexceptionable phraseology (for it would be unjust to deny the care with which the pharisaic veil is adjusted), constitute *the sole reading of many women in the upper and middle classes*; in an age when we cannot take our wives or

daughters to the theatres without exposing them to behold women of whose profession there can be no doubt whatever in the pit and at the doors.* Nay, do not these women infest our great thoroughfares and public places, staring modest women out of countenance in broad daylight, besides prowling the streets at night, unchecked in their mission of emasculating the young men of Britain?

One consequence of our prudery in literature is, that modern novels have now generally ceased to reflect faithful pictures of human life and society. Our great authors struggle in vain against the current of pharisaical opinion in this respect, which palsies the efforts of genius. The author of 'Vanity Fair,' who evidently chafes within the artificial limits imposed by a hypocritical age on his great powers of observation and description, says, I think, in the preface to 'Pendennis,' that since 'Tom Jones' was published, no English novelist has dared to describe a young man as he really is. It is perfectly true; and though I certainly do not think it is advisable to tell all the truth, we might make a much nearer approach to truth than we do. As it is, we create beings who are merely the phantoms of our own imagination, and do not appeal to the sympathy of the reader. Professing to believe that we are *fallen beings!* novelists do not hesitate to paint heroes and heroines who are immaculate. In the same breath that they declare that it is a wicked world, and that we are all miserable sinners, they dare to describe people as "*good*," who are thoroughly tainted with all the baseness of the social structure,—who have

* The Americans set the European nations a good example in this respect. There is a rule at all the respectable theatres at New York, and, so far as I am aware, throughout the Union, that no female can enter the pit or boxes without being accompanied by a gentleman.

shown no real claim to that title, unless a selfish, plodding industry for themselves, and their own flesh and blood—a slavish obedience to everything established, and an utter disregard to the claims of humanity at large—qualify men for the reward of virtue. And these are the examples they dare to hold up to young, ardent, and ingenuous minds. What incalculably bitter disappointments are thus prepared for young men and women, when, through the fading mists of romantic illusions, they perceive the stern world as it is, and the imperfect characters which they had fondly worshipped as emblems of every virtue.

A lady once told me she had read Byron, but not till after she was married; she did not think Byron was a proper book for ladies to read till after they were married. Another lady told me that she had read all that any woman should read of Byron in Murray's Handbook. Byron certainly belongs to a very large category of authors, who should not be read by young people, and who, indeed, cannot be appreciated by a great number of people even in maturity. To me it appears that a certain grasp of mind, subtlety of comprehension, power of reflection, delicacy of feeling, and, I will add, morality, philanthropy, and love of abstract truth, are requisite to a right understanding of the works of this great poet. Unfortunately, average men and women never dive beneath the surface of impropriety, which wanton minds secretly relish and openly condemn.

It is extremely painful to behold grovelling mediocrity and hypocritical sensuality sitting in judgment on this intellectual giant, dragging into light all his sins, all his infirmities, all his errors, both as man and author—all those blots and stains which these miserable critics can understand so well, in revenge for that vast ocean of beauty into which

they know not how to enter. The real mind of Byron—the grandeur of his thoughts, the sublimity of his genius—is to such readers a sealed book for ever. Men and women of this calibre have read Byron from improper motives. No wonder *they* cannot discern the beauties which have made his name immortal.*

Extremes meet. The minds of a great number of women are so super-refined as to border on indecency. We must pick and choose our words, we must talk down to them in the veriest platitudes. We dare not quote from a noble and virtuous author like Shakspeare, even. Where is this prudery to stop? I challenge this disgusting hypocrisy. I, for one, dare to throw down the gauntlet in defence of true morality. I deny that this miserable affectation, which is banishing all originality, all power from conversation in which men and women mingle, is *virtue*! I declare that I believe it to be the very opposite to virtue,—its antagonist, its enemy, its destroyer. I firmly believe that a woman who is shocked and offended by sentiments which only awaken pure, beautiful, and sublime ideas in the minds of men, is not a good woman, and that the impurity is within her own heart. Wantonness is the inseparable ally of idleness and ignorance. Weeds grow rank in untilled ground. The mind left without culture preys upon and corrupts itself.

If you seek a proof of this, observe the actions of such women, and their intercourse with each

* One is involuntarily reminded of the answer of Fuseli to the man who said he had not yet read Milton, but intended to do it. "I would not advise *you* to read Milton; *you* will find it a hard job." Also that of Turner to the critic who avowed he could not see in Nature the colours which the painter's canvas displayed. "Probably not, sir; but don't you wish you could?"

other. Very pure and elevating, instructive, profound, and philanthropic their conversation will be! Some of these fair hypocrites, who would fain pass for saints, and would rush from the room at some harmless word uttered in conversation, will, in private, gloat over all the obscene details in the police reports and divorce cases—will have by heart, in their gossip with each other, every scandal which has occurred in the community. It is on this sort of food that they nourish their virtue and morality! Women of this kind deprave each other. What books could hurt them? Why, the very worst of French novels might chasten their imagination, and would certainly elevate the tone of their intellectual powers.

It is this abominable prudery which is the great foe to a rational communion between the sexes. Its effects are seen both directly and indirectly; for numbers of women now make this affectation of nice-mindedness and purity of thought an excuse for the intellectual inanity and luxurious idleness they so much love. While a man is going through laborious mental studies, destined to teach him how to think and become a responsible being, women are seeking happiness from the gratification of human instincts, not mental qualities. They live an Epicurean life, in reality, far inferior to the earnest life of men. They drink deep draughts of fashionable dissipation, stimulating the propensities and the lower sentiments, not the higher intellectual organs. How many women, after having tasted of worldly pleasures—after having experienced flattery, adulation, flirtation, and indulged in all the licence of society—are capable or desirous of intellectual and moral progress? They have not time to spare from their accomplishments and pursuits, so nobly illustrative of a woman's mission,—dressing, dancing, piano-practice, shopping, English embroidery, &c.,—

to improve the immortal soul! All concentration of the mind bores them; so it is extremely convenient to keep female ignorance at a premium—to scout superior women and call them blue-stockings, and to declare that the great, good, profound authors, who teach and delight their fathers, sons, and brothers, and the thinking portion of their own sex, would be fatally injurious to that extreme delicacy of the female mind which now keeps women the playthings and slaves of men nearly as frivolous as themselves.

CHAPTER VI.

WILD OATS.

LEST the tendency of the previous chapters may have been by some misinterpreted into an apology for dissipation in men, I will endeavour in this chapter to examine this delicate topic in such a manner as not to offend or repulse my female readers. And I feel confident that no sensible woman will turn away from the consideration of a subject on which depend so much of the peace and happiness of her sex. That woman is indeed singularly fortunate who has not been compelled to take a direct and mournful interest in this sad failing of men—who has gone through life without having had occasion, either as wife, mother, daughter, sister, to shed bitter tears on this account.

Good men take a more lenient view of moral error in both sexes than good women ; not from any fellow-feeling blinding them to the heinousness of vice, but because, from their better opportunities of knowing the world, they are more able to weigh the temptations to which human beings both male and female are subjected—to calculate the terrible force of circumstances brought to bear on individuals, and are therefore naturally more gentle and merciful in their judgment of sin.

It would be utterly impossible in the present Essay to state these temptations in detail. How attempt to convey to respectable people, breathing an atmosphere of luxury and comfort—viewing the inferior phases of society through the erroneous rose-

coloured medium of their own happy and comparatively spotless lives—doubting the very existence of the want, depravity, and crime which burrow in the next street or neighbouring alleys ;—how, I repeat, should I attempt to convey to such—the utter absence of moral principle in which great masses of the people really live ?*

I shall, then, content myself with saying to the virtuous women who may read these pages, Thank God that you are as you are. Be grateful for the blessings you enjoy—for the good principles instilled into your minds in youth—for the careful training and watchful attention which, under Providence, have resulted in such moral purity ; and if you, in spite of the shield of beauty and virtue thrown around your footsteps by parental care, by wealth, and friends, and all the appliances of highly-civilised society, find it exceedingly difficult at times to keep within the path of duty, to preserve the robe of your integrity unsoiled—if *you* can sincerely kneel in the presence of God and avow yourself “a miserable sinner,” at least refrain from judging harshly those who, by some inexplicable lot, have never enjoyed your advantages.

Were I writing a lecture to young men on dissipation, I would take a different method from that generally pursued. I should not indulge in unmeaning and fruitless declamations, stigmatising vice as so utterly base and degrading that no man of

* See, for an eloquent description of the real condition of the lower classes, ‘Thorndale, or the Conflict of Opinions.’ I have also seen with pleasure that the authoress of ‘A Woman’s Thoughts about Women’ has dared, in this pharisaical age, to write some truths respecting female servants, which, while they provoked criticism, proved that this lady was well acquainted with the social condition of her own sex beneath the rank of gentlewomen.

generous feelings could ever become its victim, because the very Scriptures which are read from our pulpits tell a very different story. David, the man after God's own heart, basely caused his valiant servant Uriah to be murdered, after having debauched his wife. Solomon, the wisest of the Hebrew kings, at last fell into a career of unbridled sensuality.

Rather would I endeavour to regard the subject from that point of view whence it is seen by young men themselves: I would endeavour to enter into and comprehend all those cruel temptations which lead young men to brave the censure of their parents and guardians, and call down the heavy judgment of hypocritical society, which leers on vice one day and frowns on it the next. Now, this it is not so easy to do, especially for those in mature life; and if men who have themselves passed through similar follies—for "all wickedness is folly"—find it difficult to forgive, it is no wonder that on this point many women should be found implacable. We cannot wonder, for instance, if women, from the neatness and delicacy of their own habits, should hold the vice of intoxication in extreme disgust. It is quite right, and in many respects salutary, that they should do so. But they should reflect that drinking and smoking are temptations which beset every young man at his entrance into life, and make allowance accordingly.

We often see fathers totally merciless to their sons for those very indiscretions which they themselves committed at the same age. It is so difficult to recall days so long gone by, when you yourself, now a respectable *Paterfamilias*, sowed your wild oats—to reproduce in memory the strange charms and fascinations exerted by scenes, actions, and society, which are now quite repulsive. But remember that this is the great art of life, that we must all more or less buy our experience, and that so far from wild-

ness in youth being any sign of depravity, almost all men who have made themselves remarkable have been noted for some such early inclinations.

Professor Wilson, in 'Christopher in his Sporting Jacket,' Fytte First, says, "Therefore, bad as boys too often are,—and a disgrace to the mother who bore them—the cradle in which they were rocked—the nurse by whom they were suckled—the schoolmaster by whom they were flogged—and the hangman by whom it was prophesied they were to be executed,—wait patiently for a few years, and you will see them all transfigured ; one into a preacher of such winning eloquence that he almost persuades all men to be Christians—another into a parliamentary orator who commands the applause of listening senates, and

'Reads his history in a nation's eyes'—

one into a painter, before whose 'thunderous heavens the storms of Poussin 'pale their ineffectual fires'—another into a poet, composing and playing side by side, on his own peculiar harp, in a concert of vocal and instrumental music, with Byron, Scott, and Wordsworth—one into a great soldier, who, when Wellington is no more, shall for the freedom of the world conquer a future Waterloo—another, who hoisted his flag on the "mast of some tall ammiral," shall, like Eliab Harvey in the 'Téméraire,' lay two three-deckers on board at once, and clothe some now nameless peak or promontory in immortal glory, like that shining on Trafalgar."

Recollect, then, that your son is now passing through that stage through which you passed five-and-twenty years ago ; that at one-and-twenty, with health, high spirits, jovial companions, even dissipation has its romantic aspect. Young men at this age think themselves immortal, and never imagine that the fire-water they are pouring into their stomachs, and late hours, are sapping the foundation of their con-

stitutions. There is the actual pleasure of throwing off constraint, being for the time their own masters, and indulging that tendency towards the freedom of savage life which lurks more or less in the breast of every man, ere years have broken him into the yoke of civilisation.

Moreover, as I have already observed in the first chapter, public opinion is sadly inconsistent on this head. Nothing is more terrifying to a young man of spirit than the reputation of being "a muff;" and even ladies, though they don't like practically a husband smelling of smoke, and making use of a latch-key, entertain, *in theory*, a fondness for a little dissipation; and though it is absolutely necessary to punish those disturbers of peace who are taken red-handed in the act of wrenching off door-knockers and bell-handles, there are still old-fashioned people who look tenderly on those ebullitions of animal spirits, and assert that they are even praiseworthy, in keeping up the pluck of the nation, especially as regards those intended for the career of arms.

I have stated in Chapter First, what I believe to be the fact, "that vast numbers of young men periodically embrace dissipation as a matter of course, and so become habituated to and hardened in vice before they are old enough to conceive its moral enormity." As Sterne found it easier to deal with a single captive than with many, let me also restrict myself to a single example of dissipation. My sketch must necessarily be brief, but I trust many good people may glean some hints from it which will enable them to combat more successfully against this vice or folly.

Let me give Mr. Richard Rollingstone every extenuation. He is young, and desires to see life. His home is dull. He has little or no sympathy. He has good and generous tendencies; but he is at that age when the imagination overpowers the unde-

veloped judgment, and the mind, unconscious of its own great powers and high destiny, is often at the mercy of the strong impulses and surplus energies of a perfect animal organisation.

Were it possible for a young man refined by education to step at once from the holy atmosphere of the family circle into the reeking saturnalia of vice, there is perhaps hardly one who would not shrink back in horror and dismay.* But the imagination of youth, the conventional aids of wealth, robe vice in such a deceitful and alluring garb, that its victims are not aware of their danger till it is too late. Likewise we must take into account the gradual process by which the tyro in dissipation generally proceeds. He would loathe himself at the first step, if he could foresee the depth of degradation before him. But if he compare himself with other young men already engulfed in debauchery, whose gentlemanly feelings, moral principles, self-restraint, divinity of soul, are entirely gone, it is to comfort himself with the assurance that they never were like him, that he never can become like them—

“Nemo repente turpissimus fuit.”

He hesitates to accept the first invitation to a bacchanalian party, which, his conscience rightly whispers, will be his first step towards vice. But he is induced to go partly from curiosity, partly from fear of the world; that is, the dread of incurring the ridicule of a friend! who would call him “a muff,” “a milksop,” “a molly-coddle.” So he determines with some reluctance to go, but merely to be a looker-on, an observer,—“to see life,” not on any account to join in the revel. He does go, and finds himself dazzled, confused, and a little ashamed at

* The reader will remember the fine lines of Pope—

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,” &c.

his utter ignorance of a scene where everybody else seems perfectly at home. But he takes care to conceal this ignorance bravely. What a terrible humiliation it would be if he really should be thought a muff! Such, in that moment, is the strange perversion of all the moral sentiments of his nature, that he is actually ashamed of his innocence.

He drinks at first, not because he likes the liquor, but to give him confidence. The wine, or the brandy-and-water, or the punch, whatever it may be, begins to take effect. He feels at length some symptoms of positive pleasure, and he recalls classical descriptions of similar scenes from the Odes of Anacreon and Horace, so frequent in praise of wine. He joins in the chorus of a drinking-song :—

“Let us drink, let us drink, while time passes ;
After death there’s no drinking at all.”

There are then joys of which he had not previously dreamed—the joys of drinking, of good fellowship. How fond they all seem of one another! He is sure there is not one individual present who would not prove a true friend to him in need! He sees everything through his own inexperience, and the temporary excitement of his ardent nature. The time passes on, and the stimulus takes effect, till at last he feels as if he could embrace the whole world : all his antagonisms, all his prejudices, are gone ; he has not an enemy among mankind. Away with the last lurking sentiments of remorse! Can that be wrong which produces such delightful and charitable sentiments?

“Wine gladdeneth the heart of a man.”

Each speaker seems wittier, each joke better than the last. He is knocked down for a song. In default of singing, he must either tell a story or make

a speech. He does the latter. It is received with great applause. The friend who introduced him rises to propose his health. "Had any member, on his introduction to 'the Sons of Anacreon,' come out in such a right-down slap-up style—he might say, in such a whole-souled manner—as his friend Mr. Rollingsstone?" (Cries of "No, no.") "He was proud to call Mr. Rollingsstone his friend. To say that he was a good fellow, would but poorly express his merit. Was he not a trump, a bird, a bang-up fellow, and no mistake? a — a — he wanted words to express what he was. The English language—the language of Milton, Shakspeare, and Doctor Cumming!—sank under him in attempting to convey his good qualities—his noble, sociable, magnanimous, uncompromising spirit—stay—yes—there was one word—only one word, which was applicable. Was he not justified in calling his friend Mr. Rollingsstone *a brick?*—yes, a *regular brick!*" (Great cheering). "Was Mr. Rollingsstone a man to hide his light under a bushel any longer?—was it for such a man to pore over musty books, now that he had found out the right path?—now that he had seen something of life, was he wrong in hoping, believing, that Mr. Rollingsstone would persevere, that he would still continue to be an ornament to society, and not go back to his wallowing in the mire—he alluded, of course, to his studies—or bury talents which might be so beneficially employed in enlightening the human race, and so materially promoting the cause of humanity and progress, and especially the feast of reason and the flow of soul among the Sons of Anacreon?"

This ridiculous speech is greeted with deafening applause. The novice gets up to reply. He quotes Byron :—

"Let them talk as they will of a name great in story,
The days of our youth are the days of our glory."

He quotes D'Israeli :—" Nothing is so painful in our mature years as the consciousness of a youth not enjoyed." He quotes Horace :—" *Nunc est bibendum.*" "*Dulce est desipere in loco.*" "*Dum vivimus, vivamus.*" Some understand, some do not. The latter applaud the most vociferously. He speaks for an indefinite time. He experiences no desire to conclude. The subject appears to expand to infinite dimensions. He raises his glass to his lips unconsciously and mechanically from time to time, and sets it down empty. But he always finds it full. He is not aware that his right-hand neighbour—a gentleman whose name he does not know, but with whom he has sworn an eternal friendship—has been constantly replenishing it. Occasionally he has a partial consciousness that he has wandered from his subject, as he finds himself speaking of "Home," of "Female Beauty," of "the National Debt," and other irrelevant topics. He begins to see two presidents; the lights are certainly multiplied; and he experiences, though without any alarm, the shock of an earthquake, which causes the floor to tremble and renders it extremely difficult for him to keep his feet. All at once, lights, company, presidents, all disappear, and, after a terrible nightmare, he wakes up next morning with a splitting headache.

Then comes the seasoned friend, and the pale ale, or the sherry and soda-water, and the remorse of conscience is talked away, and the first plunge in dissipation has been made; and so the insidious progress goes on, and every day he finds his morals growing more lax, and himself becoming a more easy prey to the strange fascination exerted by the bottle, with its concomitants and results, until this kind of excitement has become a confirmed habit.

The life of a man who has so much of the moral sense left as to hate himself for being dissi-

pated, is necessarily unhappy. He carries his punishment in his own bosom. In the midst of the wildest orgies, the impression of his own baseness—the contrast between what he is and what he was—the thought of what he might be, of the littleness and vileness of his present indulgence in sensual pleasures compared with the intellectual life which he once led, and still feels himself capable of leading—these, and the remembrances of home, and virtue, and beauty, and honourable ambition, and a better, holier life, force themselves between him and his thoughtless associates.

Can this be the boisterous reveller who sallied out with a host of "congenial spirits" on the previous evening to make the round of London haunts ; * this young man wending his way home in the grey dawn of morning, after a night, not spent, but wasted, consumed, killed, in unhallowed debauchery ; his money cast away in reckless, mischievous extravagance ; his cheeks pale ; his eyes dull, heavy, and sunken from want of rest ? The glorious dawn is brightening over the sleeping city. It wakes no chord of sympathy or pleasure in his heart. It was not always so. Discontented, angry, despising himself, he almost doubts his own identity with the being who, in days of healthy purity, was wont to spring from his couch to greet the harbinger of day.

Mechanically he notes the prose-life of the hour—the early coffee-vendors, and the policemen standing or parading with slow and measured steps on their beats. They salute him as he passes ; for in the great city, ere the tide of humanity begins to flow, and boil, and surge, men are more drawn together. At this early hour London resembles the forest wilderness or the desert, where the few passengers

* See 'London by Night.'

are like settlers or pilgrims, and take an interest in one another. The policemen have been up all night also; but they have been up on *duty*, he on *pleasure*! Never did that word appear more hateful and unmeaning. The tired reveller almost suspects that they are able to read his secret thoughts, and that they despise him as much as he does himself.

He sees the houseless wanderers sleeping on the bridges and on the steps of doors, and stops to give charity to a poor little girl lying curled up under a porch. "Why don't you get up and go home?" he says to her. "'Cause I've no home to go to." *Oh, horror!* and this is a common occurrence. How many such outcasts might he have alleviated with the money he has scattered this night? Some gaily-dressed women were about to address him with ribald slang; but on seeing him give charity to the girl, the womanly feeling, which was not quite extinct within their hearts, got the better of the evil spirit, and one of them said, in a broken voice, "You are a good man." Such are the strange contrasts in humanity presented by the same individual.

Well may he shudder at the sight which next meets his view, yet it is nothing uncommon in this "Pagan city of London," as Emerson truly calls it,—a wretched, draggled, drunken libel upon Woman, whom the early cabmen are mocking and jeering, and whom a policeman has ordered *home*! This woman was once a little child, and fondled by a mother; she may have been even blessed by a minister of Christ; she may have been once fair and gentle, and had a lover; and now—"O tempora! O mores!" O humanity! O civilisation! that such weeds can be permitted to grow up in the nineteenth century in England—the policeman told her to go *home*! Cruel irony—HER HOME!

If I have brought this terrible object between the

wind and the respectability of the young fast man, it is to arouse him, and all others like him, to the selfishness of *Vice*. Let each young sinner examine his conscience, and ask himself, What better am I than these poor outcast women on whom the world visits so severely the immorality they overlook in men? Better, indeed!—am I not in reality worse? If women sin, they must have partners in their sin; and men are more to blame, because they know better, and sin more selfishly.

Another remarkable circumstance connected with dissipation, is the absence of sympathy which its *victims* meet with from the world. Nearly every community has a certain number of men, partly young, partly of mature age, who are entirely given over to the vice of drinking. Society, in too many instances, seems to think that it does its duty by putting such persons completely out of its pale. It holds them up as warnings; it manifests its abhorrence and disgust, as the Spartans did to their drunken Helots; but it seems to have no pity, no compassion, no refuge for them.

I remember a fact illustrative of this painful want of Christian charity and human pity. A once fine and promising young man, who had for some time past completely resigned himself to dissipated habits—to such a degree that he had become quite reckless of public opinion, and was frequently seen drunk in the streets in the morning—was one day found drowned in a river in the environs of the town. I recollect this circumstance made a deep impression on me at the time, as a damning proof of the hollowness, hardness, and selfish hypocrisy of society, and the utter inconsistency between the religious professions of men and their actual practice.

Did no blame rest on the community where this

occurrence took place? In this town were men esteemed virtuous and holy,—respectable fathers of families, magistrates, honourable men, a bishop, and several clergy of various Christian sects. Here, in this good, pious, moral, religious community, where to omit one's devotions on a Sunday is accounted a heinous crime, so little value is actually set upon a fellow-creature's life, that a young man, a fellow-being, a fellow-Christian, is permitted by his brethren to go to destruction!

"How permitted?" Was he not seen day after day helplessly unconscious from drink? How many people, before his death, had been heard to say, "That young man is going to the dogs"—"That young man will come to an untimely end"! and since the fatal event, how many complacently prided themselves on their sagacity! "So, young —— has done it at last: I knew it would end so—I foresaw it, I predicted it, &c." Have not such pronounced judgment on themselves? If the deadened conscience could speak, would it not say, "Can you hold yourselves innocent of this young man's death, since you foresaw it and took no pains to hinder it?" "How hinder it? What could we do? We did not know him personally. He had no claim upon us." O foolish reasoners! have you never, then, applied these words to yourselves: "Verily I say unto you, forasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these, ye did it not to me"?* He had no claim upon you! Was he not your brother, your fellow-man, and doubly related to you, being in misfortune? Is it, then, only bodily sickness, cold, hunger, and thirst, that call for aid? Does the disease of the mind require no helping hand? If you had seen him struggling with an assassin, you would have deemed it cowardly not to interfere; yet you could look on at

* Matthew xxv. 45.

the desperate struggle with the giant Habit, and you never went to him and warned him tenderly of the inevitable fate awaiting him unless he reformed. All your Christian ethics could not so far overcome the hard-hearted conventionality of the world.

And you, ministers of the gospel! whose especial province it is to succour the weary and the heavy-laden,—Bishop, Archdeacon, Dean, whom we pay to do that ministry and teaching of Christ which the Apostles did for love,—where were you on this occasion? You preached your best, your most eloquent sermons to young men on the very Sunday morning that the body of this young man was taken out of the water. There was manna and spiritual food for the sleek, respectable worshippers who had least need; but the poor lamb who wandered from the fold, perished unheeded by the hireling shepherd!

Even after death the world had no pity. The body was laid in a rude coffin at the parish expense. Some poor people, *real followers of Christ*, lent a shirt to cover his remains; for his relatives (he had no father, mother, brother, or sister) would not come near him. The romancist, the novelist, describing this event, would have depicted mankind as having some compassion, some compunction—as forgetting his vices, and only remembering his trials and sorrows, now that he was no more. But the world knew better. Had not its conventional prejudices been deeply outraged by suicide? Must not an example be made? It would never do to show pity. For though society can neglect its *duties*, it never fails to excite to the utmost its *rights*!

O brave Hypocrisy! in your zeal to punish crime, taking crime for granted; for there was no evidence that he committed suicide. But as it was extremely probable that the poor, friendless, desolate soul had, in a conscience-stricken, frenzied moment, “shuffled

off this mortal coil," no clergyman came to say a prayer over his body when it was laid in the earth. To make use of the popular expression, "he was buried like a dog." It would indeed have been a bitter irony to have repeated over his grave the words "our dear brother here departed."

Now, who can say that some interest displayed in—a visit—a word spoken in kindness by any of the clergymen or respectable and influential lay-members of the community—might not have been instrumental in turning the current of this unfortunate young man's destiny, by awakening the slumbering conscience, arousing his pride, and proving to him that society was not utterly selfish—that he was not totally degraded and abandoned by his fellow-beings?

Young man who may read these pages, if you have in any degree yielded to the temptations I have been describing, endeavour to follow out in your own reflections, from the sketch here given, the hollow mockery of happiness, the sin and ruin of a life of dissipation. Have you a home, a mother and sisters? Can you dare to sully the purity of the fireside circle, to look in their innocent faces, or to embrace them, when you think of the haunts whence you have come or whither you are going? Ought not these representatives of female virtue, of whose honour you are so jealous, to invest *the whole sex* with respect and dignity in your eyes?

And, O mother! O sister! do not sink into the worldly, wicked, hypocritical apathy of society on this subject. Do not, on the mistaken plea that a young man must sow his "wild oats," or from a feeling of false delicacy and prudery on your own parts, suffer a son, a brother, ignorantly, unconsciously, to contract habits of vice which will utterly destroy the blessed influence of the family

life. By keeping strict silence, by professing to think your relative virtuous when you know he is not, you become in some measure accessories to his sin. Speak to him gently and earnestly, invite his confidence, but, above all, endeavour to remove, as far as lies in yourselves, all inducements to abandon *Home!*

It is possible a young man may say, "I represent a large class of young men who have no home, no relatives. Whom can I distress or injure by my conduct? Why should I lead a moral life? What is my example—an obscure individual—to society? I shall never rob my employers, or commit any act of dishonesty which may make me amenable to justice. Surely, it is nobody's business whether my private habits are correct or the reverse."

These statements carry with them a plausibility which may, and I know does, satisfy many young and illogical minds; and the proof of this is to be found in the actual condition of morals. They are, however, altogether fallacious. *The necessity of virtue* is a natural law, as binding as honesty and truth, without the observation of which, communities could not exist. That society in which the sum of vice exceeds the sum of virtue, contains in itself the elements of dissolution. In the first place, how do you know that you have no one whom you can distress or injure by impropriety in your own life? Admitted that you have no blood relatives, you may have attachments more binding than those of kith and kin. Most people form such. Have you no friends who take an interest in your welfare? You must be singularly unfortunate or singularly blameworthy if you know no person or persons whose good opinion you covet. Do you not some day intend to marry? A very little reflection on this head will show you that your constitution is not your own, to do as you like with. *You have no right to transmit life to an unhealthy offspring!*

In the melancholy fact that numbers of children die in infancy, or are doomed to a sickly, miserable existence from the consequence of their parents' sins, what are commonly considered venial indiscretions assume the magnitude of crimes.

Again, putting aside all personal considerations, it is impossible to lead an immoral life without involving others in your sin. Either you assist to deprave those who are already fallen, or you seduce innocence. Nor does the mischief stop at all the awful consequences which follow the ruin of *one* human creature. You may become a father! "The fact itself," says Mill in his 'Essay on Liberty,' "of causing the existence of a human being is one of the most responsible actions in the range of human life. To undertake this responsibility—to bestow a life which may be either a curse or a blessing—unless the being on whom it is to be bestowed will have at least the ordinary chances of a desirable existence, is a crime against that being."*

From these hints, which might be expanded into a volume, showing the necessity of virtue arising from motives which spring from our relations to our fellow-men, reflection will teach, that an individual may not infringe any particular recognised law demanding punishment from the State, and yet be far from *good*. It is impossible to depart from Nature's law of virtue without injuring yourself and your neighbours more or less directly or indirectly. Hence, if an individual were quite indifferent to his own welfare, he is still under the strongest obligations to lead a moral life. Every offence against the canons of temperance and rectitude of conduct by which human life should be regulated, is one item cast into the aggregate mass of vice and folly under which society groans and labours.

* Mill 'On Liberty,' p. 194.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN.*

PROCEEDING analytically, I have endeavoured to show that the moral errors of men are in a great degree owing to the want of intellectual companionship with women. But, so far from wishing to favour my own sex thereby, or in any way to encourage the blind and foolish accusations which men and women mutually bring against one another, I am now about to show that, owing to the education we men give to women, it would be absurd to expect in them intellectual companions ; and that, therefore, in justice, the peculiar faults which characterise the sex are capable of the same extenuation as the errors of man.

By the actual education we give young women, which is the fruit of hazard and the most foolish pride, we leave latent in them those faculties which are most brilliant, and productive of happiness both for them and ourselves. If we dared, we would give young women the education of a slave ; and a proof of this is, that they know nothing useful but what we do not wish to teach them. But this mite of education which they do unfortunately get hold of, they turn against us, certain husbands will say. Without doubt. Arm a man, and continue to oppress him, and you will find he will turn his arms against you. Even though it should be lawful to

* The contents of this chapter are adapted from the French of Henri Beyle.

bring up young women as idiots, there would still be many little objections to such a plan.

Firstly, in case of the husband's death, the government of the young family devolves upon them. *Secondly*, as mothers, they give to the male children, to the young future tyrants, the first education—that which forms the character, and inclines the soul to seek happiness by one way rather than another—which is always achieved in the first four or five years. *Thirdly*, in spite of all our pride, in our little domestic affairs, in which above all others depends our happiness (because, in the absence of the passions, happiness is founded on the avoidance of petty daily vexations), the advice of the necessary companion of our existence has the greatest influence. Not that we willingly accord her the least influence, but that she repeats the same thing for twenty consecutive years ; and where is the soul possessing that Roman fortitude which can resist the same idea repeated during a whole lifetime ? The world is full of husbands who permit themselves to be led by their wives from weakness, not from a perception of justice and equity. *Fourthly*, in love, our happiness is entirely in the hands of the woman whom we love. A moment of misplaced pride may render us wretched for ever ; and what temptation to a slave transported to a throne, to abuse power ! From this cause, false delicacy and female vanity. Nothing more futile than these representations. Men are despots ; and what regard do despots pay to the most sensible advice ?

If ages are requisite to bring about the necessary revolution in this respect, it is because, by a fatal paradox, all first experiences must necessarily contradict the truth. Enlighten the mind of a young woman ; form her character ; give her, in short, a good education, in the true sense of the word. Sooner or later, perceiving her own superiority over

other women, she becomes a *pedant*—that is to say, the most disagreeable being in existence. Who would not rather pass his life with a cook-maid than with a female pedant? If you plant a young tree in the middle of a dense forest, deprived by its neighbours of air and sunshine, its leaves will become etiolated; it will take a slender and ridiculous form, *which is not that of nature*. We must plant the whole forest at once. What woman is vain of knowing how to read?

Pedants have repeated for two thousand years, that the female intellect is quicker, the male mind more profound; that women have more delicacy of perception, men more power of concentration. A man who has never seen any other trees but those which have been clipped into certain grotesque shapes, would conclude that all trees naturally grew so. I will admit that girls have less physical strength than boys. But what has this to do with mind? Were Locke and Newton the most muscular men of their day? It is admitted that a little girl of ten has twenty times the finesse of a little boy of the same age. Why, then, at twenty, has she become a great idiot—awkward, timid, and afraid of a spider; and the boy, a man of intelligence?

Women acquire only what we do not wish them to learn—what they read in the experience of life; whence the extreme disadvantage of being born in wealthy families. Instead of coming into contact only with people who are natural in their conduct towards them, they find themselves surrounded by domestics, and companions already corrupted and etiolated by riches. Nothing is more stupid than a prince.

Young women, feeling themselves to be slaves, have their eyes early opened. They see everything, but are too ignorant to see correctly. A woman at thirty has not the acquired knowledge of a boy of

Women would become the rivals, and not the companions, of men. Yes, as soon as, by a decree, you have suppressed LOVE ! Until then, Love would double its charms—that is all. The basis upon which affection is established would become larger. Man would enjoy *all* his ideas in the society of the woman he loved. All nature would assume new beauties in their eyes ; and as our ideas always reflect some traces of character, they would know each other better, and commit fewer imprudences. Love would be less blind, and produce less evil.

The desire of pleasing, raises modesty, delicacy, and all the feminine graces, for ever above the possibility of injury from education. One would imagine, we feared to teach the nightingales *not* to sing in spring. The charms of women do not belong to ignorance. Affectation, which is the pedantry of saying the conventional phrase, when looking at a picture or a statue, or listening to an opera, destroys all the graces of our women.

There are, let us say, about fifty thousand women in England who are dispensed from all necessity of labour. But without labour of some kind there is no happiness. A woman with four children and three hundred a year *works* while knitting stockings, or making a dress for her daughter ; but the lady who keeps her carriage does not *work* while occupied on English embroidery or a pattern in Berlin wool. Setting aside some little sparks of vanity, it is impossible for her to feel any interest in what she is doing.

A woman ought not to make herself talked about. To which I reply again—where is the woman talked about because she can read ?

The real theatre of a woman's virtues is the sick-room. But this is reasoning on the exception. To furnish sufficient employment, illness should be greatly increased. A woman should occupy three

or four hours daily as sensible men do. A young mother whose child has got the measles could not, even if she would, find time to read 'Thorn-dale, or the Conflict of Opinions,' any more than her husband could, on the crisis of a bankruptcy, take pleasure in meditating on 'Buckle's History of Civilization.'

Do you wish to make women authors? No more than you desire to bring out your daughter at the opera because you give her a singing-master. Many men possessed of an easy income derive habitual pleasure from literature, without dreaming of publishing anything themselves. To read a good book is a positive enjoyment. In ten years they find they have doubled their intellectual powers; and no one will deny that the more mind men possess, the less likely are they to have passions incompatible with the welfare of others. Nor do I think it will be denied that the son of a woman who reads Byron and Gibbon will have more intellect than the children of her who reads Mrs Barbauld.

A young lawyer, a merchant, an engineer, may be launched into life without any education; they acquire it themselves daily in the exercise of their respective professions. But what resources have their wives for acquiring estimable and necessary qualities? Hid in the solitude of their families, the great book of life and necessity remains shut to them. The weekly money for housekeeping, given them every Monday by their husbands, is always spent in the same way, in disputing an account with the cook.

The least of men at twenty, with a good complexion, is dangerous to an ignorant woman, for she is a creature of instinct alone; in the eyes of an intellectual woman he will have no more effect than a good-looking footman. The pleasant part of actual education is, that we teach young ladies nothing that they must not forget very soon after marriage. And

in these frivolous feminine accomplishments the greater number never arrive at a tolerable mediocrity. Even supposing a girl to possess some skill, three years after marriage she does not touch her pencil or her piano once a month. These arts she spent so much time to learn are grown wearisome to her, unless she chance to possess the soul of an artist—an occurrence exceedingly rare, and not at all appropriate to domestic cares.

Thus, through a vain pretext of propriety, we teach nothing to young women which can guide them in the circumstances in which the progress of life will place them. We do more than this. We conceal from them the knowledge of these circumstances, so as to add to their influence and power : firstly, the effect of surprise ; secondly, the effect of mistrust of all education as deceitful and insincere. Who will presume to say that, in our present state of society, girls of sixteen are ignorant of the existence of love ? From what sources, then, do they receive the first idea of this principle, so important, and so difficult to inculcate properly ? *

The lot of old age, both for men and women, depends on the manner in which youth has been employed. That goal is reached much sooner by women than by men. How is a woman of fifty received in society ? In a manner severe and unworthy of her merit. At twenty we flatter, at forty we desert them.

Where is the man who has the happiness of being able to communicate his thoughts, such as they arise in his own mind, to the companion of his life and the sharer of his name ? He finds a good heart to participate in his troubles ; but he is always obliged to put his ideas into small change, if he wishes to be understood. It would be ridiculous to expect rational

* Generally, I fear, from servants.

counsels from a mind which requires such a regimen to comprehend his meaning. The woman (according to the existing prejudices respecting education) the most perfect, leaves her partner isolated in the dangers of life, and very often runs the risk of *boring* him. What an excellent adviser a man might find in his wife, if she knew how to think ! One of the most beautiful prerogatives of intellect is, that it gives consideration to old age. Witness the arrival of Voltaire in Paris to make the Royal Majesty grow pale. But, as for poor women, when they have no longer the freshness of youth, their sole joy is the privilege of nursing illusions on the part they have played in the world. The remains of youthful talents are but a mockery, and it would be a happiness for our actual women to die at fifty. As regards true morality, the more mind we possess, the more we see that justice is the only road to happiness. Genius is power ; but it is, moreover, a torch to discover the grand art of being happy.

The greater portion of men have a moment in their lives when they are capable of doing great things—that in which nothing seems impossible to them. The ignorance of women is the cause of this magnificent chance being lost to the human race. Love, at the most, teaches a man now-a-days how to mount gracefully on horseback, or to choose a fashionable tailor.

In conclusion of a subject which demands a much more detailed discussion, it is a fact that men have greatly distanced women in intellectual culture ; and until a nearer equilibrium be restored, happiness cannot be attained. The remedy appears to be, a greater assimilation of the education of women to that of men, so that there may not result that dead wall of diversity of thought which now separates the male and female mind. There is a great deal that is wrong in the actual education of young men : they

are not taught the two first sciences, logic and morality. But, taking it as it is, it is better worth while to give this education to young women, than to teach them only to practise music, to draw, and to work patterns. What men desire to find, is women who can think.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE.

CAPABILITY OF LOVING STRONGER IN MEN THAN IN
WOMEN—DEFICIENCY OF WOMEN IN ENTHUSIASM
—FATAL EFFECTS OF FLIRTATION ON MEN AND
WOMEN—THE SORT OF MEN WHOM WOMEN LOVE
—INFLUENCE OF FEMALE BEAUTY.

Capability of Loving stronger in Men than in Women.

It is a question whether men or women, in the abstract, are most capable of love. La Bruyère gave the preference to women in love, to men in friendship. It is generally supposed that the rivalry of women hinders them from making those grand self-sacrifices in friendship which men have exhibited. If the question be, not whether the male or female mind in a natural state be most capable of loving, but which of the two sexes, as we find them modified by an extremely artificial state of society, is superior in this respect, I am tempted to say—Man. That is—choose out an equal number of men and women of average education, and I incline to think that the collective ability of loving deeply will be greater in the men than in the women.* It appears to me that the nature of man being altogether more developed and better fortified by edu-

* But in the lower ranks of life I should give the preference to women.

cation than that of woman, to contend against the debasing influences exerted by the world, men do feel this passion more strongly, comprehensively, lastingly, than women.

The Countess Hahn-Hahn, whom we have quoted in Chapter IV. on the intellectual superiority of men, adds this testimony also to their superiority in love :—"Under ordinary circumstances," said Faustina, "we may be superior to men in tact and fineness of perception ; but when a man loves—and this happens oftener than women are willing to allow—he enfolds the beloved one like a sensitive plant, and feels sooner, stronger, every dawning emotion, every shade of feeling, every growing thorn of disagreement, every swelling bud of happiness. But then he must love in good earnest."

In attempting, then, to demonstrate my firm conviction that the balance of loving is in favour of the men, I do not by any means deduce any results of praise or blame to either sex. This would be manifestly unjust. Men and women are, infinitely more than they imagine, under the influence of the moral law of the society of which they form constituents ; and the simple fact is, that society does not exert so much pressure on men as on women. Thus, men are in a much greater degree free agents than women ; and the result is obvious, that love springs more naturally in their bosoms. I beg my readers, then, to remember, that in laying down the broad general rule, that men love, women permit themselves to be loved, I recognise many signal exceptions.

The policy of women generally is, I think, very justly stated by a writer in the celebrated 'Encyclopédie,' thus :—"Nature appears to have conferred on man the right to govern. Women have had recourse to art to effect their emancipation. The two sexes have reciprocally abused their advantages, both of strength and beauty, these two means of rendering

people unhappy. Men have augmented their natural strength by the laws they have dictated; women have added to the power of winning them by the difficulty of attaining the prize. It would not be difficult to say on which side, to-day, is the servitude. Authority is the first object at which women aim. The love they bestow, conducts them to—that which they feel, removes them from—this desired goal. *To endeavour, then, to inspire love, to hinder themselves from feeling it—this is the grand policy of women in the abstract.*

“This art of pleasing, this desire of pleasing all, this envy of pleasing more than another, this *silence of the heart*, this irregularity of the mind, this continual falsehood called coquetry (for is it not an acted falsehood to receive attentions from two men, so as to leave each under the impression that he is the favoured suitor?) seems to be in women a primitive character, which, springing from their naturally subordinate, unjustly servile condition, extended and fortified by education, cannot be weakened but by an effort of reason, nor destroyed but by a great warmth of feeling. It has been compared to the sacred fire, which was never extinguished.”*

* The same views are expressed by Pope, in his celebrated ‘Epistle on the Characters of Women’ :—

“In man, we various ruling passions find ;
 In woman, two almost divide mankind.
 These only fixed, they first and last obey—
 The love of pleasure and the love of sway.
 That nature gives ; and where the lesson taught
 Is but to please, can pleasure seem a fault ?
 Experience this : by man’s oppression curst,
 They seek the second not to lose the first.
 Men, some to business, some to pleasure take ;
 But every woman is at heart a rake.
 Men, some to quiet, some to public strife ;
 But every lady would be queen for life.”

It is a woman's boast, it is the grand object of her moral training, that she can hide and smother her feelings of affection for the opposite sex. Her life is, and must ever be, in this respect, infinitely less frank, infinitely more conventional and artificial, than that of man. Women, compared with men, have but a limited experience of their own hearts, characters, and qualities. To men are permitted many abortive efforts to love, not only in their own rank of life, but in others ; so that a man may have sounded the depths of his own heart before he has stumbled on one real, earnest, worthy attachment ; and to men of character this rarely happens more than once.

Women, more correct, more hedged in and protected by the proprieties of life, exhibit not the same strong passions, leading to irregularities in conduct, as men, because in general they feel them not. A woman's only chance of happiness, shackled as she is by the monotonous conventionalities of society, is to lose all strong impulses, all tendencies towards freedom of the will. Hence we find women, like droves of sheep following some unknown leader, endeavouring to amuse the immortal soul with the puerilities of fashion, striving to silence the voice of nature by laborious trifling, until at length their minds assimilate to each other as closely as their handwriting, and all marks of idiosyncrasy and originality are thoroughly effaced. And women who are too independent, whose minds are cast in too *manly* a mould for this conduct, must be contented to run the gauntlet of opprobrium of their own sex in general, and that portion of ours who admire the dolls of civilization into which we have converted women.

A woman waits for her lover to appear. She must simulate and disguise "*the strong necessity of loving.*" What mercy could she expect from her own sex, were

she to display any of the frankness of man in speaking on so delicate, so interesting a subject as love. She affects indifference, she speaks slightly of this passion, the great bond of human society; she is, unconsciously and from habit, a miracle of deceit. For this woman has deep feelings, though she never shows them. She must have her preferences. Her imagination may have been cultured to the highest degree. If she possess character, she may even love a man who has made no advances to her; she may be pining for one whom she meets daily, yet, true to the modesty, "the bashful art" of her sex, the training she has received, she would rather die than give this man the slightest hint of the state of her heart until he has broken the ice by speaking about love.

It would be absurd to blame women for this deceit. We must pity them for being the victims of society, the involuntary adepts at imposture which we behold them. It is extremely difficult for us men to judge them, for we are not called upon to stifle our emotions in this terrific manner. *We* can always learn the worst, we can propose (hackneyed term for telling a woman that we love her) and be refused. *We* can at least be freed from the tortures of suspense. *We* can honestly and openly avow our preference, and do our best to win the affections of the woman we love. But the woman has only the power to reject. If she desire to bring a man to her feet, she must proceed by the most indirect and wary approaches. She is in a measure compelled to be, more or less, a coquette; for she is surrounded by men whom she does not like to dismiss, because the man she would like to marry may never propose to her. Can we wonder that women are such incomparable actresses?

To a woman, love and marriage are almost everything in this life. Her world, her earthly happiness,

lies in the affections, beyond which her existence is cheerless and sterile. With men, if the current of love turns awry, a field—a noble, honourable, useful career—still presents itself. How touchingly has Byron painted this truth in the following passage from the farewell letter of Donna Julia to her lover!—

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart ;

’Tis woman’s whole existence. Man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart ;
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange—
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart ;

And few there are whom these cannot estrange.
Men have all these resources ; we but one—
To love again, and be again undone.”

So true is this, that, to many men, failure in love has proved an advantage. Like Mr. Berkly in ‘Hyperion,’ they have lived to be grateful for being refused. To have been “made happy” would have annihilated the career of ambition. But women have neither the same philosophy, nor the same choice of occupation, to divert their minds in celibacy; and there is truth in the vulgar adage—

“A man may marry when he chooses ; a woman, when she can.”*

A woman who, at twenty, turns away shocked and offended by a proposal of marriage from a handsome and superior man, would, at thirty, were she not restrained by the fetters of custom, make overtures of marriage to a man deficient in personal and mental attractions. “To judge of her by her beauty, her youth, her pride, and disdain, everybody would

* This proverb, however, does not apply to men of delicacy and refinement. There is a moral obstacle which hinders them from marrying at any time, viz., that they cannot choose their wives as they would buy a horse or order a coat.

expect her to be charmed by nothing less than a hero. Her choice is made. It is a little monster deficient in intellect." *

In short, if, by any means, all the men in the world could be unanimous in ceasing to pay court to, and solicit the women (an event which I confess is not very likely to happen), another great change in established custom would take place. The women, instead of waiting to be asked, as they do now (though it must be confessed, in some instances, they wait very impatiently), instead of affecting disdain and unwillingness to make men happy, would abandon their indirect methods of attracting the other sex, and become the suitors themselves in their turn.

Deficiency of Women in Enthusiasm.

I have heard it asserted that women suffer more from desertion, or disappointment of the affections, than men. Here, again, I cannot help thinking that those who think so, mistake the exception for the rule. "But women have not the resources of men to banish thought and memory." Granted. What does this prove? Have women in general the same earnestness or power of concentration as men? Their life is altogether more sluggish; in love they do not rise to the same height of sensibility. Why, then, should they not be equally independent of the resources of men for banishing painful memories?

Broken hearts are rare things in reality. Fortunately for the continuation of the human race, the principle of vitality is so strong in us, that even the most feeling natures are able to forget in time. And the great majority of men and women forget too easily. A young man drowns the memory of blighted hopes in wine. He plunges into all the terrible dis-

* La Bruyère.

sipation afforded to his sex. A bad refuge, certainly ; but the anguish of the first wound of this nature is so excruciating, that we cannot wonder at the eagerness with which the sufferer grasps at the antidotes to all reflection. Besides, I simply state a fact, that ninety-nine men out of a hundred do this. Now, what refuge have women under similar circumstances ? They either die, or recover without infringing a single law of etiquette or conventionality ; and as ninety-nine women out of a hundred *do* forget their sorrows in gossip with a confidential friend, in *crotchet*, English embroidery, Berlin wool, or choosing “ a love of a bonnet,” you are driven to two conclusions : either that women have stronger minds than men, or that they do not feel so deeply.

When a man of earnest temperament *loves* ! he tears himself away from a variety of occupations, both great and small—of business and recreation—perhaps from minor attachments of which virtuous women can know nothing. He concentrates all the energies of mind and heart on the new idol—he erases the memory of all other loves, and thus, at the very outset, gives a proof of sincerity and enthusiasm—snapping the chains of habit, which it is not in the power of women to give.

In the might, power, fervour, and intensity of his love, he says of the object of his passion, “ I will make her part and parcel of myself ; her soul and mine shall become one.” In the full vigour, impulse, and tide of his own infatuation, (for what else is love but a glorious inebriation of the soul, in which a man becomes, in his own estimation, a hero, a demi-god, and thinks himself capable of warring successfully with destiny !) he never suspects that she who responds to, or rather accepts his attachment, can cherish but a lukewarm, vacillating preference. He sees her through the illusive

medium of his own feelings. But the little god has bound his fillet tightly over those eyes. And when *Crystallization** has once taken place, no wonder that the lover mistakes for maiden modesty and female delicacy, that calmness arising from undeveloped sympathies and utter inability to comprehend the majesty of a man's intellect, or to return the ardour of a man's love.

How often does a man of elevated soul, great intellect, tender heart, and vivid imagination, fall in love (to make use of the popular phrase) with a cold, conventional woman; one of those women who have always deceived imaginative men; one who is "a stove over marble;" one of those fine, dashing, beautiful, accomplished girls, who illustrate the poet's description—

"With every pleasing, every prudent part,
Say, what does Chloe want? She wants a heart!"

He is pleased that she should be cold to other men. He thinks the time will come that the ice will thaw for him, and for him alone. Exquisite delusion! that this woman, so stately, so distant, so cruel—this woman, externally a marble statue, has a warm heart within; that this haughty beauty, so capricious, so

* For the word crystallization, I am indebted to Henri Beyle (De Stendhall). He thus explains his use of the word:—"In the salt-mines of Saltzbourg they throw into the unworked depths of the mine the leafless branch of a tree. Two or three months later, it is taken out covered with brilliant crystallization. The smallest tendrils, not bigger than the paw of a titmouse, are encrusted with an infinitude of little crystals, delicate and dazzling. The original branch is no longer recognisable. This crystallization is a type of the moral process of love, by which the loved object is so thoroughly adorned with every imaginable perfection that the original character can no longer be perceived."

exacting, has found her lord and master ; that she will seek and find her happiness in obeying *him* ! He has arrived at that stage of crystallization, where he exaggerates all the merits, charms, and accomplishments of the woman he loves, until she seems absolute perfection. He anticipates the time when he may take to his bosom, and garner up in his heart—A WOMAN. Let no one say I attack the Sex when I use this word to express goodness, gentleness, and pity. I like the word *woman* better than *Lady*. It means infinitely more. It will ever be associated in my mind with deeds of virtue, which brighten the majestic page of History—not with dolls in crinoline !

It is impossible for him to indulge any misgivings that she can fall short of what the fervour of his own fancy has painted as his ideal. And if she be somewhat cold, too much the slave of etiquette, and her ideas somewhat limited, are not these the inevitable results of education ? Was she not early taught to mistrust all men ? He says to his soul : “ Be patient, O my soul, till she is mine. The virgin soil of purity and intellect is there, comparatively untilled. I will educate her anew. I will remove the superficial ideas, the prejudices she has contracted from her necessarily narrow education, as compared with my own. I will remove the barriers which now prevent a perfect intellectual communion, and the marriage of true thought. I will lift her up into my own beautiful world of knowledge. I will make her my companion—my mate in deed, as well as name ; and then her better, purer, more spiritual nature will complete the progress of moral regeneration in me.”

While the enthusiastic votary is revelling in these delusions, how often does the woman who inspired them, remain utterly unconscious of the Eden within her reach, which the love of such a

man is capable of bestowing on a thinking woman ! seeing but the exterior of him who adores *her* for something beyond mortal charms ; captivated (if she be captivated) by his perishable strength and beauty, perhaps influenced by still more earthly motives—temporal and sordid considerations as to the position and establishment which he will bestow upon her—incapable of reading the depths of his nature, of knowing or valuing his love. In her eyes, he is but a man like other men, with the same faults, who has sown his “wild oats,” and contracted bad habits, and had low intrigues : but those things, of course, her worldly prudence teaches her to overlook ; she has learnt from other women the sublime philosophical axiom “*that all men are alike.*” So she will condescend to marry him, and make him happy, and ever after assume towards him a sort of virtuous patronage so becoming a superior to an inferior moral being.

Fatal Consequences of Flirtation to Men and Women.

The man who plays with the best and tenderest feelings of the heart, and excites in a woman sentiments of affection which he does not reciprocate, is a coward. The mischievous consequences may not be patent to the world. There may be no disgrace, no death. What then ? Is there no ruin of the affections, as well as of reputation ; no death of the soul as well as of the body ? In that most beautiful of all Washington Irving's Tales, “*The Broken Heart,*” we have a powerful illustration of the effects of perfidy in love. Yet, the village-maiden who drooped and died when she discovered that the man who had won her heart was a villain, is not the most unfortunate of Falsehood's victims. There is

a lot more terrible still—a living death ; a death to budding hopes, to bright illusions ; a death to joy, content—to faith in virtue and humanity—more pitiable, and continually inflicted by men and women on each other.

The more we reflect, the more difficult we shall find it to bring home to either sex, exclusively, the charge of insincerity in Love. Each now blames the other with perfect truth. A young girl enters the world possessed of a pure, guileless heart, believing it her mission to be loved, and love in return. One day she awakes suddenly from a dream of happiness to a horrible discovery. Some man has, in the language of the world, been paying his addresses, or courting her ; has been uttering in low and musical tones, with the most seductive manner, the most bewitching praises of her beauty—things which her artless mind had accepted as the most delicious truths—words which burn themselves for ever into the memory of a young maiden. She had begun to love this man with all the ardour of a woman's first attachment, and she discovers—what? That this man means nothing ; that he regards her as a mere unsophisticated child on whom he has been practising his lady-killing powers, or else that he has been simulating a passion to obtain her hand for the sake of her fortune.

Can you wonder that such a discovery chills the young heart for ever ? Can you expect this woman to love again with the same intensity, now that the cold skeleton hand of Deception has been pressed upon her bosom, once so ardent, confiding, and warm ? Can you estimate all the mischief resulting from one such instance of disappointment ? Some worthless, brainless fop—some fashionable scoundrel—has not only taught her to distrust men for ever—has not only destroyed in her the ability of loving, but has aroused in her heart the demon of

revenge. She becomes that most detestable of all things into which female humanity can be distorted, a professed flirt—a vampire which satiates its thirst for blood in the hearts of living victims. Her beauty, her accomplishments; all those glorious attributes which were intended to make the sex irresistible for the best purposes—which were given her by the Creator as the talents to be laid out in winning one constant, brave, loving heart, and so becoming a happy wife and mother,—these are distorted into a delusion and a snare. She uses her capabilities of inflicting pain directly against men, indirectly against herself. How many human hearts will this woman have rendered wretched before she becomes either a forlorn, despised old maid, or a wife without love—perhaps something too despicable to name!

I think it will not be denied that Coquetry is a sin to which women are more prone than men. Indeed, it may be designated as the besetting sin of women, as dissipation is the besetting sin of men. I will, therefore, take a view of its effects on men of keen feeling and delicate sensibilities. Such men are peculiarly liable to suffer, being more easily duped by female blandishments, and more susceptible of pain inflicted by inconstancy. We may, for our present purpose, divide men broadly into two portions,—those who have, and those who have not been deceived by women. The latter class generally continue great admirers of the sex. A man of this stamp, if his wife dies, marries another; if *she* dies, marries a third, and so on. Each time that he marries again, he will tell you gravely that he is paying a high compliment to the memory of his previous wife or wives in doing so. I doubt extremely whether the spirit or spirits of these ladies would agree with him. Such a man says to the man of blighted hopes, “Pooh, pooh! forget

your experience. All women are not alike : as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Absurd to hate all women for the sake of one bad specimen. Fall in love again, and marry."

This is very good and philosophical advice, and will be thought so by the Smiths, Browns, Joneses, and Jenkinsees who follow it. Nevertheless, it is a fact that we all *do* form our idea of the world according to our individual experience. Strange, perhaps, but true. The nobleman's son, of very mediocre abilities, who, by the interest of his family, rises to be a bishop, a general, or a colonial governor, no doubt thinks it the best of all possible worlds. The poor, friendless man of genius, struggling and dying in obscurity, may be considered excusable if he arrives at quite another conclusion—somewhat similar to that of *Candide*—on this subject.

There are, doubtless, many men who can forget inconstant women with great ease ; but they also find no difficulty in forgetting constant women also. They live wholly in the present. Past joys, sorrows, friends, loves, are alike as if they had never been. Such shallow, veering faith or love as they are capable of feeling, they can preserve in spite of good or evil fortune. Such characterless men do not pay women so high a compliment in loving, as men of a totally opposite stamp do in *hating* them.

There are men who cherish, in youth, so beautiful, so sublime, so pure, so holy an idea of Woman's perfection, that, once destroyed, it never can return. Such men love but *once*. If they have been disappointed or deceived, the hope of securing happiness *through the affections* is over for them. The eagle soars towards the sun—he does not stoop to mate with the blinking owl. Men of this mental calibre, having once lost the bright illusions they cherished of woman, when they find that their conceptions of

Love and Marriage can never be, will not stoop to expediency and compromise. The elasticity of the heart is gone, and they cannot woo again ; for the bitter consciousness is always there, that the loved object had no real existence, but was the phantom of their own imaginations. To such, these lines of Byron present a mournful truth :—

“Who loves, raves,—’tis youth’s frenzy—but the cure
Is bitterer still, as charm by charm unwinds
Which robbed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor youth nor beauty dwells from out the mind’s
Ideal shape of such.”

Let the coquette who may be thoughtlessly or intentionally playing with the affections of such a man, pause and reflect for five minutes (if she can concentrate her thoughts sufficiently long on any one subject) upon the strange influence with which the Creator has invested Woman ; when this poor butterfly of a day has it in her power to mar the happiness of a noble nature, to sear and wound a heart which she possessed and discarded, utterly ignorant of, and indifferent to its value.

It may be said that I exaggerate the effect of female inconstancy ; that the fact of a man surviving the shock of such a blow, proves that his sufferings are forgotten, and that he is not a fit object for our sympathy. But this is not a logical inference. What anguish will not a *strong* mind live through ! We see the loved form of a friend whom we thought essentially necessary to our existence, laid in the earth ; we know that a heart whose every throb was sympathetic with our own has ceased to beat ; yet, we continue to live. The mighty flood of grief has ebbed away, to one slow, steady, silent current of sorrow.

Who shall measure the powers of the soul, or decide between human weakness and human love ?

The ability to endure is quite apart from the ability of feeling. I remember an instance where a young man destroyed himself from the effects of disappointment in love.* Suicide proved that the burthen of grief was intolerable by the individual; but what proportion of the catastrophe is due to the greatness of the burthen—what to the weakness of the sufferer?—in other words, how far did keenness of sensibility, or want of moral and mental resources, prompt to the rash act? A greater degree of philosophy, or of the religious sentiment, and this young man might have lived to love again—might have married and become a father; while a man of stronger soul, who never dreamed of suicide under similar circumstances, still lives, still remembers, still sorrows.

To a delicate and refined mind, there is no crime so fearful in its influence as the infidelity of woman; not infidelity in the vulgar acceptation of the word, infringement of the marriage-vow—but infidelity to a lover, an infraction of the chastity of the soul. Bolts and bars, constant vigilance, unremitting attentions, sense of propriety, fear of the world—a hundred temporal and unworthy motives may secure a husband's honour so far as his wife's *conduct* is concerned. But if she does not *love* him, if her heart is not entirely his, what remains to him of his wife?—a soul-less body, a galvanised corpse!

The sort of Men whom Women love.

Balzac, the greatest of the modern French novelists, has put into the mouth of a man of

* Police reports show that self-destruction from this cause is by no means an uncommon occurrence both with men and women.

fashion the following observations, which, though intended for the meridian of Paris, may possibly have some interest for English readers:—

“You must have remarked, or you will soon have occasion to remark, that women love coxcombs; and do you know why women love coxcombs? My friend, coxcombs are the only men who take pains with themselves. Now, to take too much pains about oneself, is it not to confess that one studies the welfare of another in oneself? The man who does not belong to himself is precisely the sort of man whom women covet. Love is essentially a thief. I do not speak to you of that excess of neatness of which they are so passionately fond. Find me a woman who has felt love for a sloven, although he were a superior man? If such a thing has happened, it must be attributed to some ridiculous whim of a woman *enceinte*.

“On the contrary, I have known distinguished men jilted on account of their slovenliness. A fop, who is particular about his person, occupies himself about a trifle, I grant you. And what is woman? A little thing, an assemblage of trifles. She is sure that the coxcomb will occupy himself with her, since he never thinks of great things. She will never be neglected for glory, ambition, politics, art; those grand *Heteræ* who are her rivals. Coxcombs also have the courage to cover themselves with ridicule to please a woman, and her heart is full of gratitude to the man who makes himself ridiculous for love.

“In short, a coxcomb cannot be a coxcomb without a cause. It is women who give us this grade. The coxcomb is the colonel of love. He has *bonnes fortunes*, a regiment of women to command. Thus, coxcomby is the sign of an incontestable power obtained over the female nation. A man loved by

many women, obtains the credit of possessing superior qualities ; and then it is, who will engross the unfortunate? Moreover, do you consider it nothing to have the privilege of entering a ball-room, to look at every man superciliously through your eye-glass, and to despise the greatest genius who wears a badly-tied cravat and an ill-fitting vest?

“Women are accustomed, by I know not what bent of their minds, to see nothing in a man of talent but his failings ; and in a fool, only his good qualities. Consequently, they experience great sympathy for the qualities of the fool, which are a perpetual flattery of their own defects, while the superior man does not offer them sufficient advantages to compensate for his imperfections. Talent is an intermittent fever, and no woman desires to partake only its miseries. They all wish to find in their lovers, motives to satisfy their vanity. It is themselves still that they love in us. Now, a man poor, proud, and an artist, gifted with the *poetic*, that is, the creative faculty, is he not armed with a sort of egotism? There exists about him, I know not what whirlwind of ideas, in which he envelopes even the woman he loves, who must follow its movement.

“Can a woman accustomed to adulation believe in the love of such a man? Will she go in search of it? *Such a lover has not leisure to come and play around a sofa those little apish tricks of sensibility of which women are so tenacious, and which constitute the triumph of false and heartless men! Hardly can he find time for his occupation, his work. How, then, can he become a dangler, a whisperer of soft nothings, a coxcomb, a puppy, a fop, flatterer, and fool!*

“In short, there is in the domestic life of a broker, or banker's clerk, who executes the commissions of

a pale and affected woman, an inexpressible littleness which horrifies the artist, the man of thought. A man who is poor, and great, has need of something more than love—he needs devotedness. Now, the petty creatures whose lives are bound up in Cashmere shawls—who make themselves into dolls, and lay-figures of the Fashions—are incapable of devotedness. They exact it, seeing rather in love the pleasure of commanding than of obeying.

*“The true wife in heart, flesh, and blood, allows herself to be guided by him in whom dwell her life, her strength, her glory, her joy. Superior men need women worthy of them—who can understand them. All their misfortunes arise from want of sympathy with those who surround them.”**

“Women who say they love—who often love most—dance, waltz, coquet with other men, deck themselves for society. Extinct nations—Greece, Rome, and the East—have always sequestered their women, and *the woman who loves should sequester herself.*”

The following extract from another French author furnishes a text on which ladies might meditate with advantage :—“Women always allow themselves to be won by men who do not love them enough to tremble before them. I do not know two women who have chosen for a husband a man who

* It is with great satisfaction that I call the reader's attention to the testimony of this eminent author in support of the statement which is the key-note of this Essay, viz. that the errors of superior men are traceable to the want of sympathy from women. Balzac was no mysogonist. If he can lash the follies of fashionable women, he can also deeply sympathise with female virtues and female trials. Goethe said of him, that each of his best novels appeared to have been dug out of a suffering woman's heart.

really loved them. Then they complain that they are deceived. It is always their own fault.”*

“There are men,” says a writer in the ‘Westminster Review,’ “possessing high minds and souls of delicate sensibility, hungering to find in woman, what a faith that they do not, dare not doubt, tells them is in her ; are hungering to form some real marriage ; and they roam the world’s garden, where the flowers are arranged in the choicest order to no purpose, saying, in sad disappointment—They do not answer us, speak to us ; are not companions—have so little love—are not true women.”

Influence of Female Beauty.

“The awful shadow of some unseen power
Floats though unseen among us.”

SHELLEY’S ‘Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.’

Women depend too much on their personal attractions, to the neglect of intellectual culture, for winning the love of men. I do not slight Beauty. A beautiful woman claims the admiration of every man of taste and discernment, as one of the most perfect of God’s works. “A beautiful woman,” says Emerson, “is a picture which drives all beholders nobly mad.” Beauty, however, means a

* “When we think upon it,
How little flattering is woman’s love !
Given commonly to whosoever is nearest
And propped with most advantage.

Outward grace
Nor inward light is needful ; day by day
Men wanting both are mated with the best
And loftiest of God’s feminine creation—
Whose love takes no distinction but of gender,
And ridicules the very name of choice.”

‘Van Artevelde.’

great deal more than regularity of features, bright eyes, and clear complexion. It may be divided into two broad distinctions—the physical and the intellectual type.

Great numbers of women possess that description of animal beauty which allures the other sex—which excites passion, and causes them to be sought in marriage by men who feel a pride in a handsome wife, as in house, horses, dogs, equipage, or any other chattel which enhances their importance in the eyes of the world ; and the majority of women, in their insane craving after luxury, position, wealth, and social consequence, at any price, are not only not dissatisfied with the preference thus allotted to perishable charms, but look down with scorn and contempt upon women who are too proud to make this ignoble barter of their persons.

Women of the world prefer the rich, practical, matter-of-fact men, who will not require them after marriage to increase their stock of accomplishments, or to improve their intellectual faculties, from a very logical dread that if their wives were to grow more intelligent, they might possibly cease to see in their husbands fitting samples of “the Lords of Creation,” of Man in his abstract grandeur as “the paragon of animals.” Accordingly, such women take the greatest pains to preserve their complexions, the gloss and luxuriance of their hair, the whiteness of the teeth, the softness of the skin, &c. Thus it is that personal and mental charms are seldom found combined to any great extent in the same individual, and that we meet so many women who remind us of *Mlle. de Fontanges*, mistress and victim of Louis the Fourteenth, the most Christian king!—“*Belle comme un ange, mais sotte comme un panier.*”

A French gentleman, when asked what he could find so interesting in the conversation of a lady who was as remarkable for her stupidity as for her beauty,

replied, "*Moi, je ne l'écoute jamais ; seulement je la regarde parler.*"

The beauty of woman is naturally of a much more voluptuous type than that of man, and it is made still more so by a life of idleness and luxury. It is the littleness of their education, the insignificance of their pursuits, which do not task the energies and leave the mind undeveloped, which causes so perceptible a vacuity in the faces of many women where every feature is perfect. The human countenance, as exemplified both in men and women who lead good, earnest, industrious lives, and cultivate the intellectual faculties and the moral sentiments, is perhaps more beautiful at thirty than at twenty—in the meridian than in the morning of life. At twenty, the character is unformed ; a sufficient stock of ideas and experience has not been attained. Even where the natural disposition is good, there is not that sympathy and pity for human woes, which only knowledge can give. The years which take from the bloom of youth, more than compensate by the majestic expression of the soul which time stamps upon the features of good and thinking people.

Thus there is a deep and real meaning in the proverb that " Handsome is that handsome does."

With educated men in general, the progress of life brings with it a tendency to abandon prejudice. With ladies, on the contrary, owing to their more secluded life, it tends more frequently to confirm them. A young lady who did possess some natural qualities, some warmth of feeling, some originality of thought and independence of opinion at twenty, is almost always (unless she have the good fortune to marry a man who will teach her to think correctly) broken into a thorough-paced slave of conventionality long before she arrives at thirty. We honour the man "*justum et tenacem propositi*,"

who stands out against the hoary prejudices of the world. But there are many such. A woman who dares to think for herself is indeed a prodigy. Women tremblingly obey the edicts of some despot, as invisible as the Lama of Thibet.*

At the age when the vivid and illusive hues have disappeared from the horizon of life, when knowledge and philosophy come to the aid of man, the prejudices of women are gaining ground. And the beauty of the face, which depends intimately on the cultivation of the mind, has suffered in proportion. Study, in any ball-room, or place of public resort, the settled air of discontent which mars the otherwise handsome faces of so many young women who have been out for a certain number of years, and are beginning to suspect that the degradation, the slavery, the falsehood and hypocrisy which society exacts from her victims, are hardly compensated by the pleasures she affords. At twenty, a *lady* would not exchange the privilege of her sex on any account. The young and undeveloped mind thinks it delightful to be courted, petted, flattered, on the score of temporal charms. But later, when the gloss of novelty is worn off, she grows restive under the restraint imposed upon her sex, and begins to envy the infinitely greater freedom of men.

"So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends and foes—
The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,
That—— but ask any woman if she'd choose
(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a schoolboy or a queen?"

* If this statement be disputed, I ask, why are women in the upper and middle ranks of society in Europe and America, now wearing a dress which has no one advantage to be alleged in its favour?—which is *cumbersome, ridiculous, and indecent!*

A connoisseur in female beauty finds too many faces where the effect of regularity of feature is nullified by the want of expression, the predominance of the animal over the intellectual qualities, the consequences of the want of mental training and useful occupation. If we wish to perceive the effect of education in giving beauty, we have only to compare the faces of cultivated women with those of comely barmaids, servants, and women generally ignorant; or compare two ladies, one of whom has every personal endowment without corresponding intellectual qualities, and the other *vice versé*. The former will make the greatest impression upon you at first, but the effect of her charms will wax fainter and fainter with every successive interview; while the plain, but clever woman, will soon make you forget the absence of beauty—or, rather, you will think her *beautiful* when she is talking to you, and you see her soul looking out at her eyes, and the subtlety of the intellect quickening every feature.

Occasionally we meet with women who seem to realise by their beauty the story of Pygmalion. A marble statue conceived in some happy, frenzied moment of inspiration, and wrought to perfection by the slow, laborious toil of a master's hand, appears to have become endued with life and descended from its pedestal. Such a woman exerts over an imaginative mind an influence which it requires some word unhackneyed by usage to describe. You do not dare to *love* her. She sheds around an atmosphere of reverential feeling akin to religious awe. You might as well love the Virgin in Murillo's sublime painting of the Immaculate Conception. All feelings of vanity and self-complacency are extinguished. The usual avenues to an ordinary woman's heart—gross flattery and puerile attentions—you *know* to be unavailing here. You can now

understand why the Egyptians typified Nature under female forms; why the Greeks deified women—represented the Cardinal Virtues, the nine Muses, the three Graces, as female; why, in their beautiful religion, every stream had its presiding nymph. You wish to kneel and adore this woman even as in ancient Rome they paid homage to a vestal virgin—you acknowledge all the power, poetry, purity of female beauty.

Is it not painful to think how many women fulfil this description, an acquaintance with whom would utterly destroy the illusions raised by their personal beauty? Enshrined in this glittering casket will be found a narrow and undeveloped mind and heart. She who seemed to you in the light of a celestial visitant, intended to lead some son of genius to his home in heaven—such a woman as Shakspeare, Dante, Tasso, would have been content to worship humbly at a distance, repaid by a glance, a smile, unresponsive to the language of poetry and art which she inspires—ignorant and unconscious, unambitious of the destiny she might have attained, insensible to the enthusiasm of her ardent admirers;—this woman, after fluttering her butterfly-life through her allotted number of seasons, will become complacently the ministering slave to the gross pleasures of some money-grubbing husband who buys her in marriage.

CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE.

CAUSES OF MEN'S INDIFFERENCE TO MARRIAGE—
OUGHT MEN OF GENIUS TO MARRY?—MARRIAGE
UNFAVOURABLE TO INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS—
RESULTS OF MARRYING FROM INTERESTED MOTIVES
—THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY—CONCLUSION.

It is comparatively but a very small minority of women who can so far divest themselves of interested feelings as to consider marriage from a philosophical point of view. The generality of women, looking upon marriage as *to kalon*, the '*honestum*' for their own sex, naturally desire that men should also consider it as the great desideratum of life. Hence they regard unfavourably all who are sceptical upon this point. In novels written by ladies, it is only a marrying man who is a good man. To make a hero out of a confirmed bachelor, is an act of treason towards her sex of which no woman would be capable; and women are all united against their common enemy—man, on all occasions, except where their own individual interests clash. The first object of every woman is to find a husband for herself; the next, to get husbands for all her friends and acquaintance.

If they wished to pourtray a double-dyed traitor, a monster, a fiend in human shape—in short, '*a brute*,'—they would describe a bachelor who railed against women, and marriage, and crinoline, and

everything else inseparably connected with the beautiful sex. I often fancy they might give nobler inducements for entering the matrimonial state than they do ; such as the annoyance of not having your linen properly marked, not being properly *done for* by your landlady or charwoman, and generally the lack of those little comforts which husbands alone enjoy. Yet, after all, women know their own affairs best, and are doubtless convinced that the majority of men have sublunary souls to which such terrestrial considerations are irresistible.

It is, however, a fact (of which the views advanced in this Essay may serve as in some degree explanatory), that the aversion to the holy estate is on the increase in the upper and middling ranks of society.* Numbers of men are adopting the opinion of St Paul, who, although he stated that he had a right to lead about a wife or a sister, did neither the one nor the other, and gave his opinion in favour of single blessedness in very emphatic language, implying that marriage was only preferable to burning. And even among those who do marry, the majority require a bribe in the shape of a dower.

Many of my readers will recollect the discussion and correspondence on this subject in the journals about two years since, when it was settled by the ladies that an income of three hundred a year entitled a man to rush upon his fate in the shape of matrimony. The importance and necessity of marriage to a nation at large is too self-evident a proposition to require demonstration ; and I think

* So much so, that it would not be amiss to revive the old Roman law "*Jus trium liberorum*," which gave rewards to those married men whose wives had presented them with three children, and also a penalty imposed on bachelors ; for which "revivals," we may conclude, the Roman ladies were deeply grateful to Augustus.

every unprejudiced person will be willing to admit, in spite of La Bruyère's wicked aphorism, "There are few wives so perfect as to hinder a husband from repenting his condition and envying the unmarried at least once a day," that, with sufficient pecuniary means, a union with a worthy woman of congenial disposition and tastes is the happiest—or, to speak more philosophically, the least miserable of the two modes of life.*

Admitting, then, the importance and usefulness of marriage in the abstract, reflecting men and women will arrogate the right to think for themselves, and draw their own conclusions on marriage as it respects themselves. Conversing with a friend on this topic, he supported the theory that every man should marry in early life, before his tastes, habits, &c., were thoroughly fixed; and "thus," he said, "no matter whom you marry, whether your wife be clever or stupid, you will be able, while your minds are still young and plastic, to mould them in unison with each other, and you will have at least an average chance of happiness." The argument was plausible, but I could not accede to it, because I do not believe marriage to be the great duty of every man; because I do not think that *all* were intended to perpetuate their species, and become legalised child-factors.

In the first place, some men claim a right in their own individual cases to depart from the existing prejudices on this question, upon high moral grounds. Such a man argues thus: "I am an immortal being, and I have duties, work, a mission to accomplish in this world. Is it either wise or right in me to clog

* In a novel which I read lately, called 'Friends of Bohemia,' the question is summed up very pithily in words to this effect: "There is only one condition more miserable than marriage, and that is celibacy."

and fetter my destiny, my possible usefulness to my fellow-creatures, by a rash union in early life, before I have proved my own capabilities, with another being? What right have I, under the influence of a passion or preference which the world dignifies by the word 'love,' to assume obligations which I may not be able to discharge—to pledge myself for the future, when I can only answer for the present—to swear to love for ever one whom, on more intimate acquaintance, I may find it impossible even to esteem? What right have I to bring into this naughty world children to inherit sin and death?" He puts the same question to himself which Hamlet asks Ophelia, "Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?" And let worldlings smile if they choose. It would be well if a greater number asked themselves these questions solemnly, before they take upon themselves the awful responsibilities of the married state. Then we should see fewer unloving husbands and wives, and parents who are indifferent to their children.

Another strong argument against marriage is the too rapid multiplication of the human race. Already, with all the obstacles and difficulties which cause so many men to remain celibate, and so many to postpone marriage to a mature period of life, the population of England is rapidly on the increase; so rapidly, that multitudes are steeped in poverty, and, as an inevitable consequence, in vice and crime, while numbers are obliged to emigrate. Let us imagine every man obeying the dictates of nature, and marrying at twenty-one a woman of eighteen, and the children which sprung from these unions marrying in their turn at the same age, and so on. It would require a revolution of the present state of things to make such a proposition practicable. Under what improved conditions of civilisation would the increase of population be

provided for? The state of the Chinese Empire shows that population is not necessarily strength.*

Some men (to their honour be it said) see and feel too keenly the misery and distress in the world, to study their own personal aggrandisement by marriage. They laugh at the selfish cant of '*ladies*' who desire to be supported idly on the labours of others—who rail at all old bachelors, because forsooth they have not done their duty to the world. "Our duty," they reply, "is to the whole human race; and when our hearts are daily wrung with wretchedness and want, do you dare to tell us to abandon the relief of our poorer brothers, to come and court ladies in drawing-rooms, to marry and bring more people into a sinful world?"† Occasionally you meet women rational enough to take this view of the question. But such are, indeed, few and far between. The majority think only of their own personal interests, and cry, "Marry, marry," like the daughters of the horse-leech, "Give, give."

But men of genius ought decidedly to marry. What greater solace than the love of a fond, gentle woman, to lean on amid the crosses and hardships of life—to tell to her your highest thoughts—to possess in her a friend and intellectual companion, to brighten your home, to strew your path with music and flowers, to stimulate and rouse your flagging energies when jaded, disheartened—I say, in all solemnity, would that this beautiful picture, which so many men in early life conjure up, of a

* On this puzzling question, consult Malthus, of whom Byron says,

"his book's the Eleventh Commandment,

Which says, Thou shalt not marry—unless *well*."

† I cannot conceive how any Calvinist, or indeed how any man who believes in the doctrine of original sin and eternal damnation, can conscientiously marry or beget children.

good wife, could be oftener realised! But *do* authors, artists, men of genius in every department, marry women like these? If they marry young while fame is unachieved, the harsh lessons of poverty prevent these dreams from becoming realities. Besides, sooner or later they discover that their wives do not sympathise with their enthusiasm and ambition—do not understand or appreciate their creative powers, and that, so far from assisting, they retard and hinder them in their arduous progress.

If, in spite of all obstacles, by sheer force of genius joined with indefatigable perseverance, they obtain fame, their wives, chosen from an humble rank in life, being unpresentable, cannot share with them in the smiles of the world, and must remain at home while they are accepting the hospitalities of wealthy and noble patrons. Even in the case of men of good, sound average abilities, who follow the beaten paths of established professions, early marriages are by no means popular—unless, indeed, money is got with a wife.*

Leave all theories,—go and observe married life for yourself. A man and woman unequal in intellectual capacity and cultivation, and uncongenial in tastes, unite in youth. Do you find that my friend's theory of "moulding their minds in unison" is fulfilled? Does the greater mind elevate the inferior? Do the beautiful tastes of the one communicate themselves to the other? When this does happen, it is the exception. The rule inva-

* It appears to be now recognised in "society," that no woman, whatever be her charms or accomplishments, is worth marrying without a dowry. A married man said to me, the other day, "There is not a woman in the world worth marrying without money." The observation was not made in presence of his wife.

riably is, that if assimilation be brought about, *it is at the expense of the superior being!* The keen perceptions become blunted, the refined tastes are gradually lost, the studious habits are given up, the intellectual life dies out, and what is the consequence? Why, this—that marriage, instead of being, as it ought to be, as it is vaunted to be, a means of moral and mental progress, a developement of the element of immortality, is converted into a temporal, pernicious, base yoke—it becomes both an error and a sin. If I express myself strongly, it is because I have seen unions of this sort over which I could have wept. Who has not seen and read of such! The glaring instances well known to the public are but few in comparison with those which private life could unfold. The world is full of them. They are occurring around and about us—unions which distort the whole life-plan of two souls.*

What, then, should the man of genius do? Shall he marry early or late, or remain unmarried? Shall he struggle on alone and obscure, unsympathised with, while the hope of wedded happiness gilds the future? For, after all, of what value is the success which the world calls reputation and money, unless we have some one whom we love to share with? After he has won fame and fortune, let him go and

* "The man who can be contented to live with a pretty, useful companion, without a mind, has lost in voluptuous gratifications a taste for more refined enjoyments. He has never felt the calm satisfaction that refreshes the parched heart, like the silent dew of heaven—of being beloved by one who can *understand him*. In the society of his wife he is still *alone*; unless when the man is sunk in the brute. 'The charm of life,' says a grave philosophical reasoner, 'is sympathy';—nothing pleases us more than to observe in others a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breasts."—MARY WOLSTONECRAFT.

lay them and his grey hairs at the feet of some woman hackneyed in the ways of the world, who will accept him as she would any other respectable suitor or '*good man*' (in the commercial sense) who represents the same equivalent in cash. But, as he leads his bride of forty to church, does memory recall no vision of a fair young maiden who loved him, believed in him, and would have united her lot with his, when he was "a youth to fortune and to fame unknown?"

Independently of high moral grounds, men think they have a right to decline marriage from lower motives of expediency. Their views may be erroneous, but they are plausible enough to merit some consideration and a fair hearing from the other sex. They think it is better to remain sad, lonely, wretched bachelors, in preference to marrying ladies on small means and vegetating through life in lodgings. Gentlemen have a prejudice in favour of the education they have received, and do not enjoy the prospect of a family of children growing up without the advantages of similar education and society, associating with people in a lower social sphere, and learning to speak cockney English; such as leaving out and knocking about their *h*'s, adding *r*'s to the ends of words, and saying *kairiffee* for *coffee*, *keyind* and *skey* for *kind* and *sky*, &c. And men who think thus, are obstinate enough to maintain and act upon their convictions, in spite of the clamour raised by society, and especially by women, against a life of celibacy in our sex. It is also a fact, however incredible it may be to women, that there are men who disdain to sell themselves in marriage, and since they cannot marry according to their notions of honour and prudence, are satisfied to become "fusty, musty bachelors," and "dry old sticks," to quote the elegant and witty raillery of *le beau sexe*.

Another "*dodge*" to drive men into matrimony, is to affect to consider all men, indiscriminate-

who have passed the age of thirty without marrying, as utterly given over to low dissipation. This is an extremely ingenious artifice; because, though women arrogate the right of weakness, to say as many saucy things as they please about our sex, the instant we attempt to turn the tables upon them, and hint that women are not quite perfection, they knock us down metaphorically, by the triumphant innuendo contained in the question—"With what sort of women have you associated?"*

It is in vain for you to reply, that, setting aside all pretensions to personal experience, you draw certain conclusions respecting women from history, and have always laboured under the idea that Delilah, Jaël, Jezebel, the wives of Job, and Potiphar, Helen, Clytemnestra, Dejanira, Tullia, Julia, Messalina, Agrippina, Faustina, Lucretia Borgia, Lady Macbeth, Catherine of Russia, &c., were not exactly model women.

I have great doubts whether this would be admitted, so eager has been feminine zeal to heap praise upon every woman who has made any figure in history. Observe Lady Morgan, Grace Aguilar, Mrs Hale in her 'Woman's Record,' and other authoresses, lavishing the most indiscriminate flattery on *all* the Jewish women. An attentive perusal of the notes of Dr Clarke, or any other able and learned commentator on the Bible, will convince the intelligent reader that many acts which ignorance loves to laud simply because they are in the Bible, are intended as warnings, not as examples. Are we to admire Abraham and Isaac falsely passing off their wives for their sisters; Rebecca teaching her son Jacob to steal his elder brother Esau's blessing, and deceive his aged, bed-ridden, blind father by a deliberate and impious lie? Was it a glorious and virtuous action in Jaël to decoy Sisera into the tent

* See Chapter IV. for a reply to this question.

of her husband, a friend and ally of the discomfited general, and to violate the sacred rites of hospitality (scrupulously respected in the East) by murdering him while he slept? Was it a worthy action in the harlot Rahab to betray her fellow-citizens into the hands of the enemy; in David to seduce the wife of Uriah, and cause that brave and devoted soldier to be put to death while fighting in his cause? Or can you justify Bath-sheba? If *she* was a good woman, then Lucretia was not! I have read an authoress who apologises for Delilah; and I have not the slightest doubt that had the wife of Potiphar been a *Jewess*, her conduct in tempting Joseph would have been cited as exemplary by the same lady. There is a moral obtuseness displayed by women in writing history in reference to their own sex, which could only be paralleled by men in lavishing admiration on the virtues of a Nero, a Domitian, a Judas Iscariot, a Pope Alexander the Sixth, or his son Caesar Borgia. The page of history is bright with examples of good women. To praise the unworthy is, in reality, to degrade the sex!

The censure of male wickedness does not come with a good grace from a woman plunged into the vortex of fashionable dissipation, who flirts and coquets with every man who is considered eligible, and who will, obedient creature! remove her *affections* with the speed of lightning from one man, and place them on another, at the telegraphic signal of her turbaned and highly-respectable mama, who sits ready to negotiate the sale of her "dearest Julia" to the highest bidder. Men find it exceedingly amusing to be called wicked by a woman like this, and they are apt to reply somewhat after this fashion: "No, ladies! try every fair, proper, becoming, delicate, and orthodox means of getting *an establishment*, such as the most moral and religious country in the world sanctions; exhibit your charms and accomplishments

to the utmost advantage ; wear the respectable, the *modest* crinoline; uncover your shoulders and your *necks** in ball-rooms; get your married friends to whisper little reports concerning your fortunes or expectations, which may, or may not be more or less exaggerated ; try the delightful effect of caprice, be cold one day and cordial the next:—do all these things, and much more, *quod describere longum est*, but—don't call names. That is a round game, you know, at which those who begin, often come off the worst."

The simple fact seems to be this—that *few men* are fortunate enough to be able to join all the delights and comforts of married life to the thorough success and intellectual happiness which can only attend the due employment of all their energies. At a man's entrance into the arena of life, the genius who presides over his destiny may be imagined addressing him thus: "Will you have woman's love and connubial bliss—a calm domestic life, with children round your knees; or will you be a great scholar, author, poet, painter, statesman, general, &c.? Will you choose single blessedness and fame, marriage and obscurity? To expect to unite a happy home with the prizes of satisfied ambition is unreasonable. Either alternative may be yours—both you cannot have!"

The majority of men reply, "Away with ambition!—give us wedded happiness, comfort, home, love." And the majority of men are right. The first warm and hallowed embrace of an accom-

* "I then understood for the first time that neck signifies bosom, when we speak of women, though not so when we speak of men or other creatures." See the witty account of a *soirée*, in the dialogue between Southey and Porson, 'Imaginary Conversations,' by W. S. Landor.

plished woman who loves you, the first faint cry of your lawfully-begotten child, are worth all the laurels of fame. Women need not fear—nature is strong, and they are beautiful.

Now, then, that we have comfortably married the greater portion of mankind, let us attend to our small number of men of genius who have, with equal wisdom, as I think, chosen the other alternative, and have espoused glory, art, science, poetry—those grand *Hæteræ*, as Balzac calls them, who are the successful rivals even of Women and Love. Reserve your scorn and pity, O world! for these, too, are in the right. What must be the grandeur, the beauty, the sublime interest of those pursuits which take the soul voluntarily captive, which can make men indifferent even to *the love of women*? Think what a howling wilderness would this world have been without knowledge, without the culture of the reason—without poetry, art, philosophy, science—and then try to imagine the vast debt of gratitude we owe to men of genius, without whom there could have been no civilization.

Think of the books which gladden the weary spirit, which elevate the depressed mind; which teach, strengthen, and captivate; which bring to us the lore of past ages; of the great works of art and sculpture, which refine the soul; of the musician's spell; of the poet's magic numbers, touching and thrilling the secret springs of our nature, investing life, youth, love, with new and indescribable charms. Think of all the discoveries by which humanity is aided, cherished, protected, and advanced. Think of Buffon, with his aphorism, "*Le génie c'est la Patience*," sitting at his desk fourteen hours daily; of Gibbon, labouring fourteen years in the composition of his prose epic, in which he has bridged over the chasm between the fall of ancient, and the rise of modern civilization; of Michael Angelo, dis-

dainful of model, with fine frenzy setting to work at the block of rough marble, to free the statue which his genius saw within; of Raphael, lying dead before the unfinished picture of the Transfiguration; of Socrates, martyr to the cause of truth; of Cervantes, writing his immortal novel in prison. Recall the names of Homer, Shakspeare, Milton, Spenser, Byron, Newton, Cuvier, Humboldt, Linnæus, Locke, Danté, Petrarch, Goëthe, Kant, Descartes, Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Galileo—hundreds more, without whom this world would have been a *huge grave!*—of men whose names will be remembered with gratitude as the real heroes and benefactors of mankind, when conquerors, despots, and kings are forgotten; and when you hear that foolish charge which mediocrity loves to bring against men of genius, that they do not make good husbands, reflect that there is another side to the question, and that genius may in its turn complain that it hardly ever meets with comprehension and sympathy from the world.

“He that hath wife and children,” says Bacon, “hath given hostages to fortune, for they are impediments to great enterprises either of virtue or mischief. Certainly, the best works and of the greatest merit for the public have proceeded from the unmarried or childless man.”

Talk as we may about the beneficial influence of women, it is one thing to be inspired by the historical records of female heroism—to have a faith in women in the abstract—to have the imagination warmed by beauty—to nurse dreams of ideal perfection, by which, no doubt, great and good men both of thought and action are formed; *another*, to look upon the real condition of society, and observe the daily contact with female prejudice, ignorance, and caprice. Whoever does the latter, I feel constrained to admit that the direct ten-

dency of women's influence is to retard, not to advance, the progress of human knowledge. How, indeed, can it be otherwise, when not one woman in a thousand has any opinions of her own whatever, on politics, religion, or any of those grand abstract principles by which society coheres?

Hence it follows that no man can be great who is unduly under female influence. It will be found that all men who have played a remarkable part in the world, whether thinkers or men of action, have either been unmarried, or, if married, their volition was in no degree affected by their wives, of whom they were intellectually independent. In their hours of leisure and relaxation, their wives were their companions; but they never shared with them their higher life. In their working hours, they were essentially isolated. Now, men of artistic and poetic temperament, possessing gentler souls, cannot achieve this victory, so absolutely necessary to do anything of importance. They desire to find in women, intellectual companions, sharers of their pursuits. They wish to combine the progress of the mind, the development of the soul, with all the blandishments of woman's love—that beautiful fiction of the classic ages embodied in the legend of Cupid and Pysche, which, could it be realised, would make earth a paradise. Unfortunately, they find in their wives jealous rivals of their art. If they continue ambitious, they must cease to love; if they love, they must cease to be ambitious. In the struggle, then, between ambition and love, the latter generally conquers, and thus great enterprises, “their currents, turn awry and lose the name of action.”

When a man has once succumbed to the influence of woman—when he violates the law of nature by obeying where he should command, by following where he should lead—he loses his strength as sig-

nally as Sampson under the wiles of Delilah. Then, instead of the bold, fearless, single-hearted onward march in the cause of humanity, learning, and truth, come vacillating compromise, prevaricating expediency, or cowardly paralysis. The patriot sinks into the placeman, the eloquent denouncer of error and falsehood is dumb—the whole moral aspect of the man is suddenly changed.*

Can we affect to pity the great Newton because he was a bachelor—the philosopher who is said never to have paid a compliment to a woman in his life—who, in a reverie, while *tête-à-tête* with a lady, took her hand—for what? only to make use of her little finger as a tobacco-stopper; who, after fathoming the law of gravitation, compared himself, in his sublime simplicity, to a little child gathering pebbles on the shore, with the vast ocean of Truth lying before him unexplored. The image is no less true than beautiful. For though, to the generality of mortals, a god, yet in the eyes of that Intelligence who framed the Universe with its millions of Solar systems, even a Newton would be but a kind of superior insect.

Let us, then, be tolerant to those who seek happiness in different paths from our own. Let the fair woman, in the flush and pride of her short-lived beauty, refrain from sneering at the scholar growing grey in solitude, whose dreams of love are over. It is true, he has no wife to comfort him—no tender, loving woman to lay her hand upon his brow, fevered with study; he has no child to climb upon his knees and interrupt him in the midst of a Greek chorus, with—"Papa, draw me a horse!" Yet, if there be none to cheer, there are at least none to hinder his labour. He can pursue the elevating, profound,

* See extracts from the Edinburgh and Westminster views, in Chapter IV.

ennobling thought, with daring boldness, to the very limit of his mental powers. He has no wife to charge him with impiety, or wickedness, or madness, because he goes beyond the narrow limits of her parrot-learnt opinions, her namby-pamby views of religion and philosophy, for which she can give no other reason than "we are told," which she has learnt from her mother, and which she will transmit, without the increase of a single idea, to her own daughter; for women live generally in a world of decencies, etiquette, proprieties, decorums, conventionalities, and, like all people who do not think for themselves, are extremely obstinate and tenacious in their opinions which they hold at second-hand.*

But is it only men of genius who betray an aversion to marriage? Is it not notorious that a great number of sound, practical men cannot be brought to look favourably upon marriage unless they obtain wives with money? Now, would it not be well for women to try and consider this question a little from our point of view, as well as their own? There must be reasons, independently of the expense involved in housekeeping, and other motives of pleasure or expediency, to make men run counter to the dictates of nature and the long-established prejudices of society.

Of course, all women I must suppose to have marriage in view. It would be foolish and prudish to deny it. And this admission does not imply that they are willing to make any undue sacrifice of position or character to attain their object; so far from

* The celebrated author of 'Les Caractères' says—"The greater number of women have no principles. They act from impulses, and depend for their morals on those whom they love." But this is equally applicable, I think, to the greater number of men.

it, indeed, that some of the most engaging and amiable women remain unmarried. Would it not be well if women were to ask themselves, individually—"Am I taking the right and proper steps to attract the esteem and regard of a well-principled man?" Now, who can observe society impartially, and believe that young ladies do ask themselves in earnest this question? They seem, on the contrary, to say to men—"You have a thousand faults, habits, &c., which you must correct before you are good enough for husbands. We are your superiors; we are perfect beings. Worship us, court us, marry us just as we are, or leave us alone."

With what justice can women complain that men are backward in marrying? Women in the days of our grandmothers were trained up to be good housekeepers—to bake, to brew, to be of some use to their husbands. They were willing to marry, and assist their husbands to conquer the world. "But we have changed all that." Our present young ladies are not only educated to be encumbrances, rather than helps, in matrimony—but they have no wish to marry poor men, be their merit ever so great. *They all aim at marrying men whose position is already made, and who can support them in the mischievous idleness which they love!* Let a young man of two or three-and-twenty propose for the hand of a young lady, and the mama will most probably reply—"Wait till you have made sufficient money to give my daughter such a home as she is entitled to." The man cannot generally do this till he is thirty, and long before that time he has learnt to do without marriage. Women say it is men's selfish bachelor pleasures which make them eschew marriage. Men reply, with equal truth, I think, that it is women's selfish love of luxury which makes them refuse men to have only a competence.

I know nothing more painful (it is a subject too sad to treat with levity) than to see the number of fine young women who are falling victims to their position in society. Nothing but the extraordinary apathy, bred by custom, could blind women to the base part they so complacently enact. There are multitudes of young women in the middle ranks of society trained up to believe that, in throwing themselves in the most helpless dependence on the men who come to take them away, they are conferring an inestimable boon on their husbands, and exemplifying "woman's mission."

No wonder if men of honour and principle—of reflection and refinement, and earnestness of purpose—turn away with mingled pity and disgust from the beautiful women they behold dressing, dancing, and angling for proposals, who, in their eagerness to wed, not men, but money, houses, lands, rank, &c., allow themselves to be paraded, season after season, in town, dragged about by mammas and *chaperons* to watering-places, in chase of rich and titled men, until every spark of the excellence and purity of the female nature is gone.

And what is it that these poor slaves of habit give in exchange for "*a position*," "*an establishment*," "*an eligible connection*?" to quote the vile jargon of the matrimonial mart. Virtue, beauty, youth, purity, delicacy, conscience, peace of mind, self-respect—everything but *love*; that priceless exchange of hearts, in the absence of which all the wealth and splendour of this world is but as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals;"—*Love*, which can make a woman happier in a cottage, with the man of her choice, than in the mansion of a duke, without. *If such as possess hearts* could but foresee the dreary future before them—if they could but have an instant's appreciation of what life without love is, they would shrink back with horror

from the fate which they are preparing for themselves.*

Observe, then, the consequence of this hideous moral leprosy, in rendering men infidels in love.

*. The following little gem, by N. P. Willis, will further illustrate the statements in the text :—

I.

"The shadows lay along Broadway—

"Twas near the twilight hour—

And slowly there, a lady fair,

Was walking in her pride.

Alone walked she, but, viewlessly,

Walked spirits by her side.

II.

"Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,

And Honour charmed the air ;

And all astir looked kind on her,

And called her good as fair—

For all God ever gave to her

She kept with chary care.

III.

"She kept with care her beauties rare

From lovers warm and true—

For her heart was cold to all but gold,

And the rich came not to woo—

But honoured well are charms to sell,

If priests the selling do.

IV.

"Now walking there was one more fair—

A slight girl, lily pale !

And she had unseen company

To make the spirit quail—

Twixt want and scorn, she walked forlorn,

And nothing could avail.

V.

"No mercy now can clear that brow,

For this world's peace to pray ;

For as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,

Her woman's heart gave way :

But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven,

By man is cursed away."

Can you affect to wonder for an instant that men, with such examples of female worldliness before them, lose all faith whatever in women? Are we wrong in coming to this conclusion: that women who lead this terrestrial life contentedly—who do not rebel against the worship of Mammon—who do not hate themselves for their daily, hourly falsehood—who do not desire to escape from it, are utterly incapable of love, and are consequently *not* true women?

But this sacrifice of nature is not merely a baseness; it is a folly. On whom do such women impose? They may dupe a novice; but a man of intelligence, who has had sufficient experience of society to value it at what it is worth, will never be so conceited as to attribute to any feelings of real affection, a preference shown him by a "woman of the world." Such a man will probably have suffered once, at least, by having endeavoured to love a fickle, artificial being whom he fondly supposed to be a *woman*.

He knows better now, and smiles at the idea of offering a heart to one of these minions of society who gives her *hand* to the highest bidder, and is incapable of the self-sacrifice of love. He who trembled once at the merest touch—glance—word—from her he loved, now mingles daily with the most beautiful women; listens to vows, protestations, tender speeches; notes their languishing glances; reckons up all the little arts of coquetry; reads the most eloquent *billets-doux* quite unmoved. He can whisper soft nothings, and flirt gaily, quite unembarrassed by the direct attentions levelled at him by women beautiful as the *Houris* who await the true believer; for no one knows better than he, that the preference of which he seems the object, is either a studied artifice, or, at best, a whim, a caprice, fleeting fancy, having no root in that fickle bos-

not inspired by his mental or moral qualities, but personal and adventitious attributes which are totally external to the real man.*

Such a sceptic has he become, that, should he by any chance be loved by a woman not yet spoiled by the lessons of good society, he would distrust the evidence of his own senses rather than believe in such a miracle. He has either ceased to have emotions of any kind, or else he wears an armour over his heart, and laughs bitterly at the idea of again being duped into trusting in *a woman's vows*. He is firmly convinced that love is a youthful illusion which can have no place in the heart of any sane man after thirty; or that the man who at that time of life can believe that a woman loves him for his own sake, must be radically and hopelessly a coxcomb, possessed of a fund of self-conceit, and showing an ignorance of human nature of which no experience can cure him.

"Many women," writes Mary Wolstonecraft in her 'Rights of Women,' "have not mind enough to have a friendship for a woman, or an affection for a man. But the weakness of her sex, that makes a woman depend on man for a subsistence, produces a kind of cattish affection, which leads a wife to purr about a husband, as she would about any man who fed and clothed her."

I am well aware that there is another side to the picture, and that men and women charging each other with insincerity is pretty much (to make use

* A gentleman requesting a married lady to plead his cause with a young lady, proved his knowledge of the *disinterested character of young women!* He did not waste time in dilating on his moral qualities or his accomplishments, but simply came to the point thus: "Tell her, madam, that I have a brougham and a thousand a year."

of a homely simile) "like the pot calling the kettle black;" that many warm-hearted women are victims, in their turn, to our social custom which permits a man to become utterly *blasé* before he selects a wife. "In the eyes of these small tyrants," says Eugène Sue, "woman, a kind of inferior animal, in whom a council of Cardinals deigned to recognise a soul by a majority of two voices, ought to think herself supremely happy to be the servant of these little Sultans, old at thirty years of age, worn-out, exhausted, *blasés*, weary with excesses, wishing only for repose, and seeking, as they say, *to make an end of it*, which they set about by marrying some poor girl who is, on her part, desirous to make a beginning."

All our social customs respecting courtship and marriage seem intended to counterbalance the natural charms and attractions of women, and to deter men by making them ridiculous. You will tell me, women have more *tact* than men. In little things they may have. But do they show it in matters of importance? It is their sole object in life to marry. Yet, for the temporary gratification of pleasing coxcombs, they alienate men of sense who would have made them good husbands.

Many men, I am convinced, remain bachelors from no particular dislike to women, but from an insurmountable horror of the marriage ceremony. On this point men seem to have more delicacy than women. They do not like to invite the public to come and gaze, and speculate on what does not concern them. As our weddings are conducted, they appear to me in the light of grand female triumphs, in which the woman virtually says, "Look, I am going to be married. A man is leading me—that is, I am leading him—to the altar. He has the good taste to select me from all the women in

the world, to make him happy. I have consented to sacrifice myself, and destroy the peace of mind of all my other admirers, and a few of my female friends also, for the sake of this individual. Ought he not to feel proud, and to make a resolution to be a good boy for ever afterwards?"

What is marriage? It is a solemn obligation, entered into between two responsible persons, to ratify before witnesses one of the tenderest and most beautiful relations which can exist between man and woman. It should be performed devoutly, decorously, without ostentation. The real virtue of the marriage ceremony is in the avowal of love and promise of fidelity. Formerly, the priest was no more than an ordinary witness. Various causes—the desire to increase the perquisites of the clergy, to make the ceremony more solemn, &c.—have made him a prominent personage. But marriage is in reality, according to law, a civil contract. You can be married with or without a clergyman, as you please. The parties, in short, marry themselves. Adam and Eve pronounced their vows to their Maker alone.

So little conception do the generality of women appear to have of the true idea of marriage, that they would not consider themselves properly married unless there was (to use their own language) "*a fuss*," and a parade, and a breakfast, involving considerable expense. New dresses must be bought, as if the bride had hitherto a deficient wardrobe; coaches must be hired; there must be half-a-dozen bridesmaids, and the attention of a number of strangers must be concentrated on the principal actors. Everything, in short, is judiciously calculated to puff up the woman with vanity, and make the man feel humiliated, ridiculous, and ashamed. He doubts whether a proceeding involving so many disagreeables on the threshold can be wise. Why

could he not have been married by proxy? Why cannot he fly from the altar at the eleventh hour? It is too late! Then comes the hollow mockery of his wife, swearing to love, honour, and obey him, who is now trembling like a coward at her side, while she is calm and composed.

Contrast this ceremony, so degrading to manhood, with the old patriarchal style of doing these things. "When Rebekah approached Isaac," says Alexander in his 'History of Women,' "she did it in the most submissive manner, as if she had been approaching a lord and master rather than a fond and passionate lover; from which, as well as from several other parts of the sacred history, it would appear that women, instead of endeavouring, as in modern times, to persuade the world that they confer an immense favour on a lover by deigning to accept of him, made no difficulty of confessing that the obligation was conferred on themselves."

In taking leave of marriage, I must apologise to my readers for any occasional levity of style in treating what I am assured by many married men is very far from being a joke. I will conclude with the following excellent advice to ladies, from the pen of N. P. Willis:

"Heed ye this, ye who are winning, by your innocent beauty, the affections of high minds and thinking beings. Remember that he will give up the brother of his heart, with whom he has had ever a fellowship of mind—the society of his coteremporary runners in the race of fame, who have held him with a stern companionship—and frequently, in his passionate love, he will break away from the career of his burning ambition, to come and listen to "the voice of the charmer." It will bewilder him at first, but it will not long; and then think you that an idle blandishment will chain the mind that has

been used for years to an equal communion? Think you, he will give up, for a weak dalliance, the animating themes of men, and the search into the fine mysteries of knowledge? Oh, no, lady! believe me—no! Trust not your influence to such slight fetters! Credit not the old-fashioned absurdity that woman's is a secondary lot, ministering to the necessities of her lord and master! It is a higher destiny I would award you. If your immortality is as complete, and your gift of mind as capable as ours of increase and elevation, I would put no wisdom of mine against God's evident allotment; I would charge you, water the undying bud—to give it healthy culture, and open its beauty to the sun—and then you may hope that when your life is bound up with another, you will go on equally, and in a fellowship that shall pervade every earthly interest."

In conclusion, let me briefly recapitulate the contents of the foregoing pages. I began by laying down the principle, that the respective failings of men and women, broadly comprehended under the words Dissipation and Frivolity, were not inherent in either sex; but were the results of education and the modification of society. In Chapters Second and Third, I showed the great superiority of male education, and the consequent weakening of intellectual sympathy and domestic ties between men and women, inducing the former to seek abroad for the comprehension and mental excitement they cannot find at home. Hence, I deduced the fact, that dissipation was the *effect*, and not the *cause*, of want of sympathy between the sexes. In Chapter Fourth, I combated the prejudice that the inferior intellectual was the superior moral being; and in Chapter Fifth, I exposed the prudery and hypocrisy which confound female ignorance with virtue, and clearly

showed that the affectation of a nice-mindedness which would be destroyed by mental culture, is the great stronghold of female frivolity, and the foe to all intellectual or moral progress. In the succeeding chapter, "Wild Oats," while leading women to form a more rational comprehension of the moral errors of men, I did not attempt to excuse these errors, but drew a warning picture of vice. Hitherto I may have seemed too firmly bent on finding a plea for men against the prejudices of society; but in the succeeding chapter I pleaded for women against the prejudices of men, and advocated a better system of education. In the chapters on Love and Marriage, I considered men and women as we find them artificially moulded by society, and exhibited the proofs of the fatal want of sympathy and intellectual equality in thwarting the intentions of nature, making sincere love all but impossible, and marriage a misery instead of a blessing, thus stifling the most powerful and beautiful of all the passions, and perverting the most beneficial of all human institutions.

I need not here point out to the intelligent reader the direct bearing of all I have written on the principle which served as my text, nor enter into details of the broad general conclusions which would seem to arise; viz: The faults of men are owing to woman's incapability of sympathising with them. Women's incapability of intellectual sympathy is owing to an inefficient education; and this inefficient education is owing to the jealousy of men, who desire to keep women in a subordinate situation. Here, of course, an entirely new question is opened up. At present, I think women are susceptible of a much better education than we give them, without running any danger of being unsexed, or rendered unhappy from the cultivation of their energies proving disproportionate to the field of their exercise.

Should any exception be taken to occasional levity of style as applied to a subject whose importance it is difficult to exaggerate, I beg to say that my object was to detract as much as possible from the gravity of an Essay, and to write a work which would be interesting to general readers, and especially to women: and this may likewise serve as my apology for not speaking out more boldly, and going more deeply into the investigation of certain nice and delicate questions. Should any lady-reader take offence at detached portions of my work, let me beg her to view it as a whole. It is well for women to hear the truth occasionally. They will at least learn in these pages, whether right or wrong, what are the opinions of a great number of men with whom they associate daily, but whose hearts they never fathom.

I cannot think any sensible, good woman will be aggrieved at the censure I bestow on the mere women of the world; on those outrageous caricatures of the sex in round hats and voluminous skirts—those fast young ladies, who glory in copying only the faults and follies of men. Indeed, these poor animated dolls—these human butterflies, fluttering away their little span of life without a thought of the old age or the immortality awaiting them—are more deserving of pity than blame. The very existence of such women is a reflection upon our sex; for it is evident that the fools they try to please are more in number than the wise men whose good opinion they can afford to despise. The great aim of women is to make men love them; and when they see that the majority desire in them, not playthings for a leisure hour, but intellectual companions, worthy fellow-travellers on the road to Eternity, they will cease to reflect our follies and eccentricities, and rival us in our noblest attributes.

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